

Canada's Folk, Roots and World Music Magazine

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penquin eggs

Natalie MacMaster

Ralph McTell
Buena Vista Social Club

Prairie Oyster
Ken Hamm
Demon Barbers
Galitcha
Crooked Still

Celtic Colours
Bruce Molsky
Doug & Jess Band
Clay George
Jeunes Musiciens du Monde

Issue No. 32
Winter 2006



Win Bob Dylan's CD Modern Times — Plus news, reviews and more ...

CONGRATULATIONS

to Festival Distribution's nominees at the Second Annual Canadian Folk Music Awards



Best Album - Contemporary

The Wailin' Jennys - Firecracker
Oliver Schroer - Camino
Joel Fafard - ...And Another Thing...

Best Ensemble

Bebop Cowboys - Canadian Dance Hall Music
Tandava - Tandava

Best Songwriter - Aboriginal

DiggingRoots - Seeds

Pushing the Boundaries

Silk Road Music - Autumn Cloud: Journey with Her Pipa
Andrew Collins - Little Widgets
Madrigaia - Pléiades

Best Album - Traditional

James Keelaghan - A Few Simple Verses

Best Instrumental Group

Lache Cercl - Muzika Konkordo
Uzume Taiko - Undula

Best New/Emerging Artist

T. Nile - At My Table
Dyad - No Pedlars or Preachers

Best Children's Album

Rick Scott - Snooze Music

Best Songwriter - English

Romi Mayes - Sweet Somethin' Steady

Best Vocal Group

Madrigaia - Pléiades
The Wailin' Jennys - Firecracker

Best Singer - Traditional

James Keelaghan - A Few Simple Verses
Rita Chiarelli - Cuore: The Italian Sessions

Producer of the Year

David Travers-Smith - The Wailin' Jennys 'Firecracker'

Best World Group

Tandava - Tandava
Silk Road Music - Autumn Cloud: Journey with Her Pipa
Madrigaia - Pléiades

Cover story

37 . . . Natalie MacMaster has always taken chances with her records. Her latest, *Yours Truly*, is no exception. It includes a song from former Doobie Brother Michael MacDonald, and native chants from actor Tom Jackson.

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Quotable

"Just as there are endangered species in wildlife, there are endangered species in culture and music. If we don't make a move to protect and promote the traditions of this planet, many of them are bound to disappear."

— Mathieu Fortier, *Jeunes Musiciens du Monde*

"I've spent entire days without seeing a single soul in here and right before you call I get these three yah-hoos, playing every shitty song they know, yelling at the top of their lungs between their missing teeth."

— Clay George enjoys his day job

"Rashad says that old-time music is the original rock music. If you are at an old-time jam, it is rock 'n' roll."

— Aoife O'Donovan of *Crooked Still*

Sheet Music

60 *The Tide's After Shiftn'* by Laura Smith

65 Two traditional Quebec fiddle tunes, — *6/8 à Jos Bouchard* and *Le Talencourt* — arranged by Pascal Gemme.



Buena Vista Social Club Revisited



Celtic Colours



Musiciens du Monde

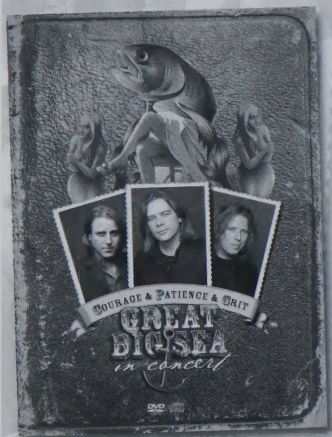


Galitcha

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This magazine takes its name from Nic Jones's wonderful album *Penguin Eggs* — a collection of mainly traditional British folk songs revitalized with extraordinary flair and ingenuity. Released in Britain in 1980, it has grown into a source of inspiration for such young, gifted performers as Kate Rusby and Eliza Carthy.

Nic, sadly, suffered horrific injuries in a car crash in 1982 and has never fully recovered. He now seldom performs. His care and respect shown for the tradition and prudence to recognize the merits of innovation makes *Penguin Eggs* such an outrageously fine recording. This magazine strives to reiterate that spirit. Nic Jones's *Penguin Eggs* is available through Topic Records.

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for the Arts



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Foundation
for the Arts

Canada

editorial

As absurd as it seems, I'm totally convinced a great indifference now exists between many performers and their audiences. It struck me while watching Son Volt last summer. Jay Farrar, one of the truly unique Americana voices, makes a monumental effort to part with, "Hello." Mind you, Bob Dylan managed a mumbled, "Thanks," after his first encore the last time through Edmonton. I go to live events as much to experience the personality as the performance. And if some cold, distant, pretentious prat adopts an attitude of, "Here's my art; take it or leave it," ... well, please allow me to insist that, on your next day off, you go and attempt an anatomical impossibility on yourself.

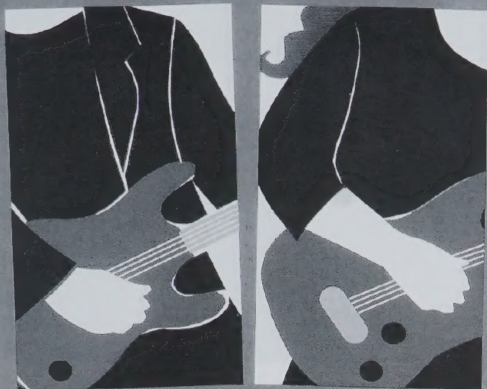
If it were only about the art, wouldn't we all sit at home in front of our stereos? Recordings, after all, are supposed to reflect the highest musical standards possible. Powerful music stirs great emotions. Joy. Sorrow. Anger. Good communicators ought to do the same. At a live event, I want to be entertained. And I want to enjoy a connection with somebody in whom I've invested time and money on records and concert tickets. I certainly don't want elitist claptrap that smacks of a "them and us" mentality.

The odd thing is, the folk circuit, particularly in the U.K., used to be full of brilliant, humorous conversationalists — former Humblebum Billy Connolly being a prime example. He, of course, went on to an incredible career in comedy. And yet he learned his craft playing the banjo and telling stories in front of fickle pub-and-club audiences. It took lots of accumulated skill to engage such crowds. While his type of patter is a dying art, there are still a few masters around. Billy Bragg on a good day can do the business. Natalie MacMaster does it naturally. Evalyn Parry, ditto. Vin Garbutt, though, remains the outstanding folk scene raconteur. Attending a Garbutt concert ought to become mandatory preparation for anyone remotely considering a career as a musician or singer.

Primarily because of easier access to dynamic, quality teachers and programs, coupled with the advent of idiosyncratic instructional DVDs, the standard of musicianship among young performers now sits at an all-time high. And yet, it's one thing to execute music with clinical perfection. It's something else entirely to consistently connect with and move an audience. Warmth, wit and the humility to recognize that your audience puts bread on your table are lessons to be grasped, mastered and cherished. Forward into 2007.

— Roddy Campbell

rick fines & suzie vinnick



NOTHING HALFWAY

4 Mapleblues Nominations!

Rick Fines and Suzie Vinnick -

Acoustic Act, Songwriter

Suzie Vinnick - Bass Player, Female Vocalist

Rick Fines and Suzie Vinnick: Nothing Halfway

"Marked by spirit and effective songwriting, there is nothing halfway about Nothing Halfway."

— Brad Wheeler, *Globe and Mail*

"...a stunning collection of duets ...
a must-have disc!"

— John Valenteyn, *MapleBlues Newsletter*

"This is Saturday afternoon music that
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— Eric Thom, *Exclaim Magazine*

*solar powered
rick fines*

Rick Fines: Solar Powered

"strings exquisitely picked and eloquently bent in
the style of the great American country blues artists"

— Greg Quill, *Toronto Star*

"Just try not to smile when Rick Fines is on the
stereo... Recorded at his "little cabin in the woods"
on, as the title suggests, solar powered
systems, the material sounds sun-infused."

— Norm Provencher, *The Ottawa Citizen*

www.rickfines.com



iTunes

www.rickandsuzie.com

CONTACT: info@rickandsuzie.com

ckua's top 20

The most-played folk, roots and world-music discs on ckua radio throughout September & October - www.ckua.org

1. Sam Barker
2. Kasey Chambers
3. Los Lobos
4. Leeroy Stagger
5. Jenny Whiteley
6. Indigo Girls
7. AA Sound System
8. David Francey
9. Jim Cuddy
10. The Duhks
11. Shawn Colvin
12. Guy Clark
13. Be Good Tanyas
14. Various Artists
15. Michael Franti
16. Blackie & The Rodeo Kings
17. Rachelle Van Zanten
18. Jessica Heine
19. Justin Rutledge
20. Jack Johnson

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Mercy | (Bull Creek) |
| Carnival | (Warner) |
| The Town And The City | (Universal) |
| Depression River | (Boomp) |
| Dear | (Black Hen) |
| Despite Our Differences | (Universal) |
| Laissez-Faire | (Saved By Radio) |
| The First Set | (Laker) |
| The Light That Guides You Home | (Warner) |
| Migrations | (Sugar Hill) |
| These Four Walls | (Sony) |
| Workbench Songs | (Dualtone) |
| Hello Love | (Nettwerk) |
| Blues Around The World | (Putumayo) |
| Yell Fire! | (Anti) |
| Let's Frolic | (True North) |
| Back To Francois | (Independent) |
| Either Way | (Independent) |
| Devil... in Stanley Park | (Six Shooter) |
| Curious George | (Brushfire) |



Jenny Whiteley

soundscapes' top 10

Compiled from September & October sales at Soundscapes, 572 College St., Toronto, Ontario, M6G 1B3

1. Bonnie Prince Billy
2. Matt Ward
3. Bob Dylan
4. Justin Rutledge
5. Be Good Tanyas
6. Ray Lamontagne
7. Califone
8. Various Artists
9. The Sadies
10. Amy Millan

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| The Letting Go | (Drag City) |
| Post-War | (Merge) |
| Modern Times | (Sony) |
| Devil on a Bench in Stanley Park | (Six Shooter) |
| Hello Love | (Nettwerk) |
| 'Til The Sun | (Sony) |
| Roots And Crowns | (Thrill Jockey) |
| Jamaica To Toronto | (Light In The Attic) |
| In Concert Vol 1 | (Outside) |
| Honey From The Tombs | (Arts&Crafts) |



Be Good Tanyas

sam's top 15

Compiled from September and October sales at Sam The Record Man 1656 Barrington Street, Halifax, NS.

1. Bob Dylan
2. Jill Barber
3. Rose Cousins
4. Amelia Curran
5. Various Artists
6. Old Man Luedecke
7. Be Good Tanyas
8. Mark Knopfler & Emmylou Harris
9. Charlie A'Court
10. Various Artists
11. Jim Cuddy
12. Madeline Peyroux
13. Todd Snider
14. Various Artists
15. Dixie Chicks

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Modern Times | (Sony) |
| For All Time | (Rhapsody) |
| If You Were For Me | (Rhapsody) |
| War Brides | (Independent) |
| Atlantic Standards | (WEA) |
| Hinterland | (Independent) |
| Hello Love | (Nettwerk) |
| All The Roadrunning | (Mercury) |
| Bring On The Storm | (Independent) |
| Leonard Cohen: I'm Your Man | (Verve) |
| The Light That Guides You Home | (Warner) |
| Half The Perfect World | (Rounder) |
| Devil You Know | (Oh Boy!) |
| Celtic & Traditional Lullabies | (V3) |
| Taking The Long Way Home | (Sony) |



Jim Cuddy

mary jane lamond's favourite 10 recordings

- Nusrat Fateh Ali Kahn
 Habib Koite
 Lhasa
 Wendy MacIsaac
 Catherine-Ann MacPhee
 Jennifer Warnes
 Various Artists
 Various Artists
 Various Artists
 Various Artists

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Nightsong | (Real World) |
| Ma Ya | (Putumayo) |
| The Living Road | (Nettwerk) |
| Timeline | (Independent) |
| Canan nan Gaidheal | (Greenlax) |
| Famous Blue Raincoat | (BMG) |
| Cape Breton Traditions | (Topic) |
| Comria Cruinn | (CBC Recordings) |
| Down From The Mountain | (Mercury) |
| North Shore Gaelic Singers | (Heritage) |



Mary Jane Lamond

sillon's top 10

Compiled from September and October sales at Sillon Le Disquaire, 1149 Avenue Cartier, Québec, Québec, G1R 2S9

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. Bob Dylan | Modern Times | (Sony) |
| 2. Agnès Jaoui | Canta | (Warner Bros) |
| 3. Ali Farka Toure | Savane | (Nonesuch) |
| 4. Ray Lamontagne | Til The Sun | (Sony) |
| 5. Bia | Coeur Vagabond | (Fusion III) |
| 6. Nuevo Quadro | Mocca Flor | (Justin Time) |
| 7. Céu | Céu | (Six Degrees) |
| 8. Martha Wainwright | Martha Wainwright | (Zoe) |
| 9. Dobacaracole | Soley | (Indica) |
| 10. Paul Kunigis | Exodus | (Select) |

fred's top 10

Compiled from September and October sales at Fred's Records, 198 Duckworth St., St John's, NL, A1C 1G5

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Amelia Curran | War Brides | (Independent) |
| 2. Ron Hynes | Ron Hynes | (Borealis) |
| 3. Bob Dylan | Modern Times | (Sony) |
| 4. Duane Andrews | Crocus | (Independent) |
| 5. Madleine Peyroux | Half The Perfect World | (Rounder) |
| 6. Various Artists | Our Songs | (Putumayo) |
| 7. Cantus Vocum | CV Home | (Avondale Music) |
| 8. Tony Bennett | Duets | (Sony) |
| 9. Punters | Songs For A Sunday Morning | (Avondale Music) |
| 10. Great Big Sea | The Hard & The Easy | (Warner Bros) |

highlife top 10

Compiled from September and October sales at Highlife Records, 1317 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3X5

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Be Good Tanyas | Hello Love | (Netwerk) |
| 2. Michael Franti | Yell Fire! | (Boo Boo Wax) |
| 3. Bob Dylan | Modern Times | (Sony) |
| 4. Easy Starr All Stars | Radiodread | (Easy Starr) |
| 5. Ska Cubano | Ay Caramba | (Cumbancia) |
| 6. Madleine Peyroux | Half The Perfect World | (Rounder) |
| 7. Toumani Diabate | Boulevard L'Independence | (World Circuit) |
| 8. Boozoo Bajou | Juke Joint 2 | (K7) |
| 9. Various Artists | Blues Around The World | (Putumayo) |
| 10. Ali Farka Touré | Savane | (World Circuit) |

megatunes' top 10

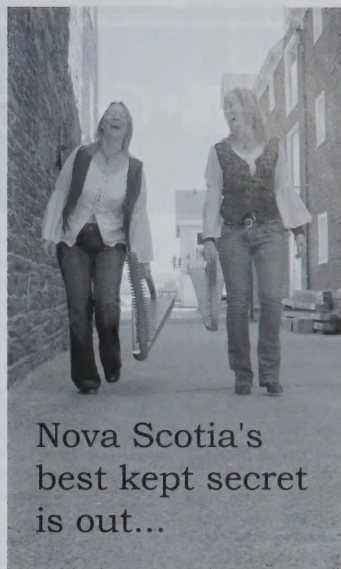
Compiled from September and October sales at Megatunes, 10355 Whyte Ave. Edmonton, AB, T2T 0A2

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Bob Dylan | Modern Times | (Sony) |
| 2. Mark Knopfler & Emmylou Harris | All The Roadrunning | (Mercury) |
| 3. Blackie & The Rodeo Kings | Let's Frolic | (True North) |
| 4. The Sadies | In Concert Vol I | (Outside) |
| 5. Greg Keeler | Aphrodite Rose | (Telesoul) |
| 6. AA Sound System | Laissez-Faire | (Saved By Radio) |
| 7. Guy Clark | Workbench Songs | (Dualtone) |
| 8. Be Good Tanyas | Hello Love | (Netwerk) |
| 9. Carrie Rodriguez | Seven Angels On A Bicycle | (Back Porch) |
| 10. Wendy McNeill | The Wonder Show | (Determine) |

hmv's top 15

Compiled from all September and October sales at hmv stores across Canada

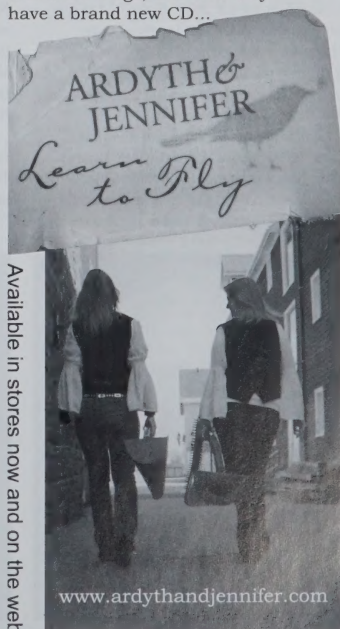
- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Be Good Tanyas | Hello Love | (Netwerk) |
| 2. Gipsy Kings | Pasajero | (Warners) |
| 3. Jesse Cook | The Ultimate Jesse Cook | (Narada) |
| 4. Marco Calliari | Mia Dolce Vita | (Independent) |
| 5. Corb Lund | Hair In My Eyes... | (Story Plain) |
| 6. Gipsy Kings | Greatest Hits | (Warners) |
| 7. Natalie MacMaster | Yours Truly | (Foreign Media) |
| 8. Buena Vista Social Club | Buena Vista Social Club | (World Circuit) |
| 9. Rachid Taha | Diwan | (Island) |
| 10. Corb Lund | Five Dollar Bill | (Story Plain) |
| 11. Various Artists | African Guitar Summit | (CBC) |
| 12. The Wailin' Jennys | Firecracker | (Jericho Beach) |
| 13. Ani DiFranco | Reprieve | (Righteous Babe) |
| 14. Loreena McKennitt | Boof of Secrets (Remastered) | (Quintan Road) |
| 15. B.B. King | Gold | (Geffen) |



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News•Gossip•Rumour•Tattle

Veteran Cape Breton fiddler **Buddy MacMaster** will be inducted into the Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame, December 1. MacMaster will join **The Chieftains' Paddy Maloney** as the only other non-Scot in the Hall. The induction takes place at Fort William as part of the Scots Trad Music Awards weekend held from Dec. 1-3. **Battlefield Band** fiddler **Alasdair White** will compose a special tune to mark MacMaster's induction. He once taught White fiddle. Shetland fiddler **Aly Bain** is also among this year's inductees. Posthumous awards will go to traditional singer **Jeannie Robertson** and the legendary accordionist **Jimmy Shand**. In other Scottish news, Aly Bain's partner and co-founder of **Silly Wizard**, **Phil Cunningham**, received an honorary doctorate from the University of Sterling in November for his outstanding contributions to traditional Scottish music.

In a move that has surprised many, Mariposa has dropped **Randi Fratkin** as its artistic director. A committee will now book the event for 2007. Fratkin, AD for the past four years and involved with Mariposa since 1991, is widely credited with reviving the flagging fortunes of a folk festival once regarded as the Canadian flagship. And she did it unpaid.

"On September 19th, I got an e-mail from the president [**Christopher Lusty**] letting me know that the board decided to remove the position of AD, and to establish an artistic committee, and made the current

vice-president [**Mike Hill**] chair of that committee," says Fratkin. "I think the situation certainly warranted a telephone call at the least, or even a face-to-face meeting. That was pretty much how it all ended."

In a prepared statement sent via e-mail to Penguin Eggs, Lusty wrote: "The decision was the result of many discussions over the course of at least three years. Further, it is not, in our estimation, a destructive decision. We did what we thought was right, not what was easy. . . . The time may come when we will have another AD."

"I cannot discuss the particulars of this decision except to say that there is nothing nefarious lurking in the gloom, it is merely the result of a parting of ways."

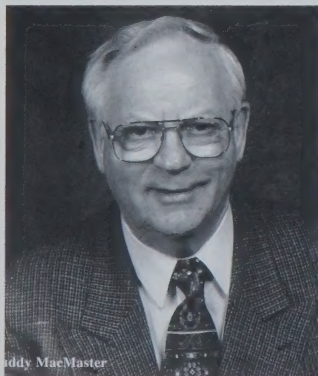
"I feel sad that Randi Fratkin, who has almost single-handedly given Mariposa its mojo back after all these years, has been ousted to be replaced by a committee," says former Mariposa AD, **Richard Flohil**. "I can think of no major festival with an artistic direction set by a committee . . . I suspect that the folk at Mariposa think that a committee can always do better than an individual. Maybe it can, if you want a festival designed without a viewpoint, with out balance . . . I hope Mariposa rethinks a hasty, ill-considered and destructive decision, and one that will rob the festival of a unique and distinctive future."

Fratkin will now program a new folk festival, Kingfest, in King City, northwest of Toronto. It will run June 23 and 24, 2007, on the campus of Seneca College.

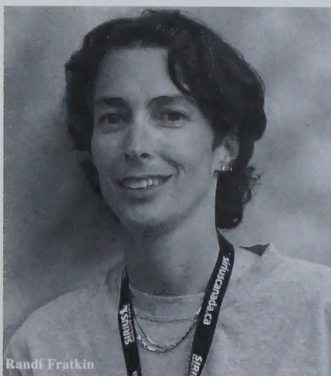
Mint Records celebrated its 15th anniversary in October. **Bill Baker** and **Randy Iwata** created the company in 1991 while working at CTR 101.9 FM, at the University of British Columbia. Over the years Mint has released such acts as **Huevos Rancheros**, **The Buttless Chaps**, and of course, its biggest successes to date, **Neko Case** and **The New Pornographers**. Case has just released a DVD of her live performance filmed at Austin City Limits in 2003.

Odetta is the recipient of the 2006 Winnipeg Folk Festival Achievement Award, Dec. 7, at the festival's annual Winter Wassail. She will receive \$10,000 and a commemorative plaque. She will also perform a short set. The achievement award was established to recognize outstanding accomplishments in folk music. Those nominated must have performed at the Winnipeg Folk Festival. Odetta played there in 1978, 1981 and 1985. **Martin Luther King Jr.** once called her "the Queen of American folk music." Both **Bob Dylan** and **Joan Baez** cite her as an inspiration. The two previous awards winners were **Loreena McKennitt** (2004) and **Bruce Cockburn** (2005).

The Winter Wassail is the festival's annual celebration of the music that marks the winter season. This year, it takes place at the Winnipeg Convention Centre. The event includes dinner, live music and a silent auction. Tickets are \$125. For more information or tickets, call the festival at (204) 231-0096 or see www.winnipegfolkfestival.ca



Buddy MacMaster



Randi Fratkin



Odetta

The Perth County Conspiracy's

Rumour II album, one of the first home-made independent Canadian vinyl releases, in 1973, has been reissued. Originally a plain white LP with mimeographed sheets stuck inside, it was pressed from tapes recorded live in Ottawa, Sudbury and Winnipeg, and features songwriters **Cedric Smith, Richard Keelan and Bob Burchill** with **Michael Butler** (bass), **David Balser** (percussion) and **Judy Crocker** (piano and flute) in a melange of political, spiritual, and vaudeville chaos. There is more material likely to see the light of day from the Conspiracy archives. For more information, see the Perth County page at www.davidwoodhead.com.

At age sixty, **Max Layton** – the son of the late, celebrated Canadian poet Irving Layton – has recorded his first album of original songs. Faced with the recent prospect of losing his sight, Max wrote most of the material while grappling with this major change in his life. While his vision has since been restored, the experience inspired a cluster of songs about mortality and family relationships. The CD, *Heartbeat of Time*, was produced by **David Woodhead**. It features Layton, a high school teacher, on acoustic guitar, **Al Cross** on drums, **Anne Lindsay** on violin, and Woodhead on bass, guitars and keyboards.

A new website to promote house concerts in Canada can be found at www.acousticroof.ca. The focus of this site is to act as a community-based network and free resource for house concert hosts, touring music artists and audiences. It includes news, reviews and features and a downloadable house concert guide. Those interested in promoting their house concert

through acousticroof.ca may submit a venue profile. Similarly, artists may submit a profile to promote themselves. While the resources on acousticroof.ca are free, the maintenance of the site depends on the generosity of its supporters. For further information, contact **Julian West** at julianwest@acousticroof.ca.

Plans are now underway to record songs written by the late and much-lamented **Paperboys'** drummer, percussionist and songwriter **Paul 'Lolly' Lawton**. **Paperboys** founder **Tom Landa** is co-ordinating the project. Recording is slated to commence at the beginning of December.

The **McDades** have been given the Award of Excellence in Performance by the city of Edmonton, AB. The ceremony was to be held there Nov. 21.

Canadian icon **Ian Tyson** was invested into the Alberta Order of Excellence on Oct. 19. The Order, the highest honour in the province, was presented by Lieut-Gov. **Norman Kwong**.

Oct. 17, Tyson was also inducted into the British Columbia Country Music Association Hall of Fame at the organisation's annual conference. Tyson was born in Victoria, BC.

To complete the hat trick, **Ian and Sylvia** were to be inducted into the Mariposa Folk Festival Hall of Fame. They will sing together at a special performance on Nov. 24 at Hugh's Room in Toronto. Ian and Sylvia headlined the first Mariposa festival in 1961, and Ian, then a graphic artist as well as a singer, helped design (along with **Murray McLauchlan**) the festival's logo, which is still in use. Tyson will also participate in a tribute CD to mark the 100th anniversary of **Gene Autrey's** birth, along with the likes of **Willie Nelson** and **Vince Gill**.

Canadian Folk Music Awards Nominees, 2006

Best Album – Contemporary

Penny Lang – *Stone & Sand & Sea & Sky* (Borealis); Corb Lund – *Hair in My Eyes Like a Highland Steer* (Stony Plain); Jim Byrnes – *House of Refuge* (Black Hen); Bruce Cockburn – *Life Short Call Now* (True North); *Wailin' Jennys* – *Firecracker* (Jericho Beach).

Best Album – Traditional

Nicolas Boulerice et Olivier Demers – *Un peu d'ci, Un peu d'ça* (Independent); James Keelaghan – *A Few Simple Verses* (Jericho Beach); Claude Méthé – *L'Amant Confesseur* (Independent); Strada – *Gamos* (Independent); Serre l'écoute – *Fortunes et Perditions* (Independent).

Best Songwriter – English

Lennie Gallant – *When We Get There* (Independent); Ron Hynes – *Ron Hynes* (Borealis); Stephen Fearing – *Yellowjacket* (True North); Romi Mayes – *Sweet Somethin' Steady* (Independent); Sarah Noni Metzner – *Daybreak Mourning* (Dog My Cat).

Best Instrumentalist – Solo

Oliver Schroer – *Camino* (Independent); Joel Fafard – *... and another thing* (Independent); Steve Dawson – *We Belong to the Gold Coast* (Black Hen); James Hill – *A Flying Leap* (Borealis); Bruce Cockburn – *Speechless* (True North).

Best Instrumental Group

The McDades – *Bloom* (Independent); Lache Cerceel – *Musika Konkordo* (Jericho Beach); Uzume Taiko – *Undula* (Independent); Fig For a Kiss – *Fallen Leaf* (Independent); L'anche à deux cordes – *Musique Traditionnelle du Québec* (Independent).

Pushing the Boundaries

Silk Road Music – *Autumn Cloud: Journey with her* (Independent); Andrew Collins – *Little Widdgets* (Independent); Madrigaia – *Pleiades* (Independent); The McDades – *Bloom* (Independent); Harry Manx – *Mantras for Madmen* (Dog My Cat).

Best Solo Artist

Penny Lang – *Stone & Sand & Sea & Sky* (Borealis); Bruce Cockburn – *Life Short Call Now* (True North); Stephen Fearing – *Yellowjacket* (True North); Corb Lund – *Hair in my Eyes Like a Highland Steer* (Stony Plain); Harry Manx – *Mantras for Madmen* (Dog My Cat).

Best Vocal Group

Madrigaia – *Pleiades* (Independent); The Wailin' Jennys – *Firecracker* (Jericho Beach); Serre l'écoute – *Fortunes et Perditions* (Independent); Madviolet – *Caravan* (Sony); Dala – *Angels and Thieves* (Universal Music).

Best Ensemble

The McDades – *Bloom* (Independent); Mauvais Sort – *Koru* (Independent); Bebop Cowboys – *Canadian Dance Hall* (Independent); Jim Burres – *House of Refuge* (Black Hen); Polémil Bazar – *Avale ta montre* (Independent); Tandava – *Tandava* (Independent).

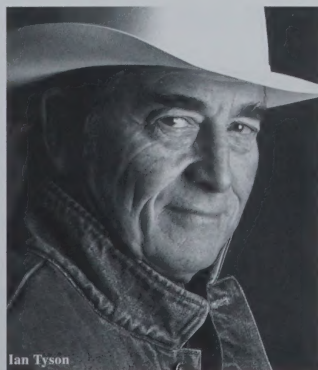
Young Performer of the Year

Daniel Gervais (Edmonton, AB); Sarah Burnell (Ottawa, ON); Samantha Schultz (Edmonton, AB); Tubeless Girls (Telkwa, BC); The Vissia Sisters (Edmonton, AB).

Producer of the Year

David Travers-Smith (The Wailin' Jennys – *Firecracker*); Steve Dawson (Jim Byrnes – *House of Refuge*); Stephen Fearing (Stephen Fearing – *Yellowjacket*); Mike Roth (Dala – *Angels and Thieves*); Jordy Sharp (Harry Manx – *Mantras for Madmen*).

Please see Award Nominees 2006 on Page 11



Ian Tyson



Sylvia Tyson



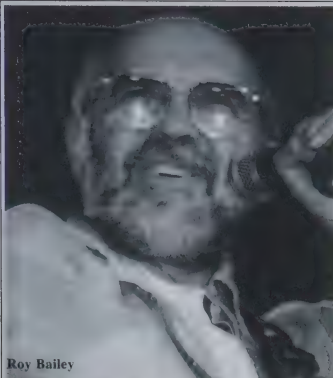
EDMONTON
FOLK MUSIC
FESTIVAL

**The Edmonton Folk Music Festival congratulates all the
2006 nominees for the Canadian Folk Music Awards**

Good luck in particular to all the young performers nominated:

**Daniel Gervais (Edmonton, AB); Sarah Burnell (Ottawa, ON);
Samantha Schultz (Edmonton, AB);
Tubeless Girls (Telkwa, BC); The Vissia Sisters (Edmonton, AB)**

**The Young Performer of the Year will be offered a spot
at the 2007 Edmonton Folk Music Festival, August 9 –12**



Roy Bailey

The new Nanaimo, BC-based roots music label, Root Cellar Records, released its first three discs in July. They include the raunchy, blues-rock of *This Blue Before* by **Smiling Jack Smith**, the evocative, story-telling of *In the Arms of Morpheus* by **Joanna Finch** and the jazz-inflected country of *Sweet Embrace* by **Andrea Smith**. In keeping with Root Cellar's mandate to foster individual Canadian voices, all three albums are the original work of BC-based singer-songwriters recorded on Vancouver Island.

After seven years apart, **The Rankin Family** will reunite for a twenty-two city national tour to support the release of an unyet-named new album. The original quintet made up of brothers and sisters **John Morris, Heather, Jimmy, Raylene** and **Cookie Rankin** began performing in 1989, rocketing to fame with the release of their second recording, *Fare Thee Well Love*. The band sold more than two million records and won six Juno Awards, including group of the year in 1994, before going their separate ways in 1999. John Morris was killed a year later in a car accident in Cape Breton. The new album will include covers of **John Hiatt, David Francey** and **Gordon Lightfoot** songs.

Noted multi-instrumentalist **Stefaan Hannigan** has moved to Canada to open an instrument store in downtown Toronto, at 401 Richmond St. and Spadina. Born in Northern Ireland, Hannigan has recorded with the likes of **Lorena McKennitt, The Afro-Celts, Bjork**, and erm... **Uriah Heep**. He is also the author of several instruction books on how to play the bodhran and the low whistle. Hannigan's store will be called Musidium and opens sometime after Christmas. It will stock over 600 world music instruments. It will also sell records and art work related to folk and

world music. The premises will also include a studio for recording and feature the odd live concert. Hannigan, who plays uilleann pipes, whistles, bouzouki and bodhran, with his partner, **Saskia Tomkins**, on fiddle and viola, hope to start performing in Canada. To contact Hannigan go to www.myspace.com/stefaan

Veteran English singer **Roy Bailey** returned his MBE (Member of the British Empire), awarded in 2000 for services to folk music on Aug. 21 in protest over the British government's foreign policy. Bailey, a lifelong Labour Party supporter, felt Prime Minister **Tony Blair's** support of U.S. foreign policy in Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq and Lebanon was a "betrayal" of the party's values. Bailey together with **Tony Benn** were awarded Best Live Act at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards in 2003.

Fairport Convention's groundbreaking album *Liege & Lief* has won a gold disc - nearly 37 years after it was first released. A gold disc represents sales of 100,000 in the UK. *Liege & Lief* came out in December 1969 on the Island Records label. It was immediately hailed as a masterpiece as it featured the novel idea of performing such traditional folk songs as *Matty Groves* and *Tam Lin* on electric instruments. As recently as February 2006, it won Most Influential Folk Album of All Time at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. In an onstage ceremony at Fairport's festival in Cropredy, August 11, individual Gold Discs were presented to members and representatives of the band's *Liege & Lief* line-up.



Awards Nominees, 2006, continued

Best Children's Album

Ken Whiteley - *Join the Band* (Independent); Various Artists - *Le Petit Chien de Laine* (Independent); Connie Kaldor - *A Poodle in Paris* (Independent); Rick Scott - *Snooze Music* (Independent); Kathy Reid-Naiman - *Reaching for the Stars* (Merriweather).

Best New/Emerging Artist

T. Nile - *At My Table* (Independent); David Myles - *Things Have Changed* (Independent); Dave Carmichael - *Spirit Dance* (Independent); Dyad - *No Pedlars or Preachers* (Independent); Dala - *Angels and Thieves* (Universal Music).

Best Singer - Contemporary

Stephen Fearing - *Yellowjacket* (True North); Bruce Cockburn - *Life Short Call Now* (True North); Jim Byrnes - *House of Refuge* (Black Hen); Lennie Gallant - *When We Get There* (Independent); Ron Hynes - *Ron Hynes* (Borealis).

Best Singer - Traditional

James Keelaghan - *A Few Simple Verses* (Jericho Beach); Enoch Kent - *I'm A Rover* (Second Avenue); Rita Chiarelli - *Clare: The Italian Sessions* (Independent); Raymond Lavoie (Wagonbar) - *Placotage et Autres Nouvelles* (Independent); Leon Bibb - *Praising Peace: A Tribute to Paul Robeson* (Stony Plain).

Best Songwriter - Aboriginal

Wayne Lavallee - *Green Dress* (Independent); DiggingRoots - *seeds* (Jericho Beach); Art Napoleon - *Miyoskamin* (Independent); Laura Vinson and Free Spirit - *It Reminds Me* (Independent); Don Freed - *The Valley of Green and Blue* (Independent).

Best World Group

The McDades - *Bloom* (Independent); Strada - *Gamos*; Tandava - *Tandava* (Independent); Silk Road Music - *Journey with Her Pipa* (Independent); Madrigalia - *Pleidiades* (Independent); Polémil Bazar - *Avale ta Montre* (Independent).

The Canadian Folk Music Awards take place Dec. 10 at the Myer Horowitz Theater on the U of A campus, Edmonton, AB. Tickets are available through Ticketmaster.

I am a DJ - I am what I play

Taking a cue from Jackson Browne's song of the same name, Before The Deluge is a folk program on CJSR, campus-based community radio in Edmonton. The show was started in the mid-80s by Mary Thurber and passed to Sandy Stiff, another long-time folk DJ, in 1996. Since then the show has focused on an eclectic mix of folk, world, and roots musics, with a particular emphasis on traditional and traditionally-influenced music from around the world. Before The Deluge also includes updates on local roots music events and its past guests have included Maria Dunn, David Francey, Gravel Road and Eileen Lavery. Sandy's partner, Richard Thornley, joined the show in 2006.



Before The Deluge airs every second Sunday from 2-4 p.m., MST, on CJSR 88.1 FM and can also be heard at <http://www.cjsr.com>. It is also blogged at <http://before-the-deluge.blogspot.com>



Winterfolk

Blues and Roots Festival

February 9 - 10 - 11

Winterfolk V
February 9 - 10 - 11, 2007

Presenting over 100 Artists in 6 Clubs
for 3 Days of Roots - Blues - Folk & More

**Winterfolk is a Free Festival -
No Admission Charge!**

Accepting Artists Submissions

Hot Toddy, BeBop Cowboys, Wendel Ferguson,
Nancy Dutra, Jory Nash, Greg Hobbs, Danny
Marks, David Gillis, Laura Repo, Trio Bravo, Marty
Allen, Ryan LeBlanc, The Choir Girlz,
Norm Hacking, Brent Mason, The Guitar Boys of
Alderon, and more!

Visit the Website for more information

www.winterfolk.com

**Win a copy of Bob Dylan's
latest disc Modern Times**



Bob Dylan needs no introduction on the pages of this magazine. He is, arguably, the most important and influential figure in contemporary music. *Modern Times* is Dylan's first new album in five years and it went straight to No. 1 in its first week of release on album charts around the world. It's his first U.S. chart-topper since *Desire*, which sat at No. 1 for five weeks in 1976. Rolling Stone magazine awarded *Modern Times* a five-out-of-five star review and described it as "evenly divided between blues ready-mades, old-timey two-steps and stately marches full of prophecy". Well now, much thanks to the kindness of those nice people at Sony Music, we have six copies of it to give away. To win one, all you have to do is answer correctly the following three questions and e-mail your answer to penguineggs2@shaw.ca. Please don't forget to include a postal address.

Q1: Who signed Bob Dylan to Columbia records?

Q2: At what festival did Dylan first appear with an electric guitar?

Q3: Name the song Bob Dylan recorded off Nic Jones' Penguin Eggs?

Answers to the Old Crow Medicine Show's *Big Iron World* contest are: Q1: Gillian Welch. Q2: Doc Watson. 3: Marty Stuart.

And the winners are: Stephen Harvey, Courtney, BC; Pat Battles, Victoria, BC; Doug Swanson, Edmonton, AB; George Campbell, San Francisco, CA; Mary Bennett, Cork, Ireland; Anne Dunn, St John's, NL.

Kirk MacGeachy 1950-2006

Kirk MacGeachy, the sweet Scottish tenor who led Orealis, the Montreal-based Celtic band, died suddenly from a heart attack in his sleep, at home on Ile Cadieux, just west of Montreal, Aug. 20. He was 56, writes Mike Regenstreif

Kirk grew up in Anstruther, a fishing village on Scotland's east coast. His parents were both teachers and encouraged an interest in music. Kirk started performing in Scottish folk clubs as a high school student. As a student at the University of Edinburgh in the late-1960s, he was drawn further into the revival of Scottish traditional music. Kirk married Patricia Ramsay in 1971. A year later, Kirk and Pat moved to Montreal where Kirk pursued his Ph.D. in marine geology at McGill University. After obtaining his doctorate, Kirk became a professor of geology at John Abbott College in Montreal and was preparing to start a new semester of teaching at the college when he died.

In Montreal, Kirk led a series of Celtic bands including Celtic Conspiracy, Brahan Seer and Orealis, which he founded in the late-1980s. Orealis recorded two albums for Green Linnet.

Kirk also released a duo album with Dave Gossage and a solo album. In addition to his lovely voice, Kirk was also a fine songwriter heavily influenced by the Scottish traditional music he loved. Around Montreal, he was everyone's favorite Celtic singer for decades.

This obituary first appeared in Sing Out! magazine V50#4, (c) 2006 Sing Out!. It is used here with kind permission, all rights reserved.

Etta Baker 1913-2006

Another direct link with American traditional music was severed with the death of Etta Baker on 23rd September 2006, in Fairfax, VA, writes Roddy Campbell. Born Etta Lucille Reid in Caldwell County, North Carolina, March 31, 1913, Baker first gained broader recognition through her appearance on the 1956 LP of field recordings, *Instrumental Music of the Southern Appalachians*, where she fingerpicked guitar instrumental versions of *Railroad Bill* and *One-Dime Blues*. Baker played Piedmont blues, a style that drew from the clattery rhythms of bluegrass as well as blues.

After working for 26 years at a textile mill in Morganton, Baker quit to pursue a career as a professional musician, at age 60. She recorded her first album for Rounder (*One Dime Blues*), in 1991. She subsequently recorded further albums for the Music Maker Relief Foundation,

including one with her sister, Cora Phillips, and one with Taj Mahal (*Etta Baker With Taj Mahal*) in 2004. Baker toured well into her 80s, but finally had to quit because of heart problems. This year she no longer had the strength to play guitar so she focused on playing banjo. She appears on blues-rock guitarist Kenny Wayne Shepherd's next release due out in November.

Freddy Fender 1937-2006

Country singer and songwriter Freddy Fender died of lung cancer, Oct. 14, at his Corpus Christi, TX, home. He was 69, writes Roddy Campbell. Born Baldemar G. Huerta in 1937 in San Benito, TX, he began playing Texas honky-tonks after serving in the marines. His career really began in the late '50s, when he recorded Spanish versions of Elvis Presley's *Don't Be Cruel* and Harry Belafonte's *Jamaica Farewell*, which were hits in Mexico and South America. Huerta signed with Imperial Records in 1959, adopted a stage name taken from his favourite brand of guitar and had a regional hit with his *Wasted Days And Wasted Nights*.

That early career ended when he was arrested in 1960 in Baton Rouge, LA, for possession of marijuana and served three years in Angola State Prison. It took until the mid-'70s before he achieved national fame with *Before The Next Teardrop Falls*, on the independent label Crazy Cajun. The late 1970s were, artistically, the best years of his life. Fender later observed, but drugs and alcohol took a toll. He spent time in drug rehabilitation in 1985. Three years later Robert Redford gave him a part in *The Milagro Beanfield War*.

In 1989, Fender was "playing for peanuts" when he was asked to co-found roots rockers Texas Tornados with Augie Meyers, Doug Sahm and Flaco Jimenez. They made three albums on Reprise: *Texas Tornados*, *Zone Of Our Own*, and *Hangin' By A Thread*. The first of these made the Billboard pop albums chart and won a Grammy for the track *Soy de San Luis*.

Fender shared in another Grammy for the self-titled album by Los Super Seven in 1998. Fender came full circle, winning his own Grammy for best Latin Pop album in 2002 with *La Musica de Baldemar Huerta*.

Josh Graves 1927-2006

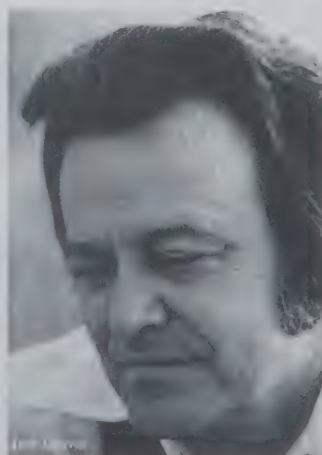
Josh Graves evolutionized the role of the dobro in country and bluegrass. An extraordinarily gifted musician renowned for his rolling syncopated technique and astonishing speed, his seminal recordings as a member of Lester Flatt and

Earl Scruggs's Foggy Mountain Boys established the resonator guitar as an essential component of postwar roots music. Graves died Sept. 30. He was 79, writes Roddy Campbell.

Graves was born in Tellico Plains, TN. Though he began as a bassist, he bought a dobro for \$70 in the mid-1940s to emulate his boyhood hero, Cliff Carlisle, a fixture of Jimmie Rodgers's landmark RCA sessions. Graves played with the Pierce Brothers, Esco Hankins, and Mac Wiseman before joining the Wheeling Jamboree in 1949 with Wilma Lee & Stoney Cooper. Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs heard Graves playing with the Coopers at the Grand Ole Opry, and invited him to join their Foggy Mountain Boys.

In the late 1950s, acoustic instruments were out of favour due to the popularity of rock-'n'-roll; the survival of the dobro in country music is largely attributed to Graves. He used a three-finger banjo roll, adapted from Scruggs. Graves stayed with the Foggy Mountain Boys until they disbanded in 1969, then joined Flatt's Nashville Grass and the Earl Scruggs Review in 1971. Graves went solo with the LP *Alone at Last* in 1974 but also recorded with the likes of J.J. Cale, Steve Young and Kris Kristofferson.

The Gibson Corporation developed a Graves signature-model dobro, built to his specifications. Graves' solo albums included *King of the Dobro* (1996), *Sultan of Slide* (2000), and *Memories of Foggy Mountain* (2002). In 2000, Graves had a leg amputated. Two years later he lost the other. But he continued to perform up to his last



Shortcuts

Andrea Beaton

By MaryBeth Carty

On an unlit, winding, dirt-road in the middle of nowhere, we finally reach a crowded parish hall. There are cars everywhere, and the dance floor is jumping. This is the scene every summer Monday night in Brook Village, Inverness County, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada, to be exact. On this particular night, fiddler Andrea Beaton from Mabou provides the dance tunes.

In July, Andrea released her third disc — a live recording, *The Tap Session*, taped at The Tap Inn, Birnam, Scotland, where she has worked for the past two winters.

"The owner often hires traditional musicians," says Andrea. "We bartend but he has sessions every Monday so we can join in. You work there, you live there, and you play there. It was a great chance to meet Scottish musicians."

Shooglenifty's Luke Plumb and piper Fin Moore, whom she met at these sessions, are featured on the album. Fellow Nova Scotian Troy MacGillivray provides some wicked (and rather revolutionary) piano accompaniment.

"I had tunes picked out but we didn't really stick to what I had planned. It was more off the cuff than anything I've ever recorded before." That element of spontaneity provides *The Tap Session* with much of its energy.

Andrea's interest in the fiddle developed gradually. "I took lessons at 13 but then I backed off. I was really shy. During a year at [St. Francis Xavier] university when I was 18, my dad [Kinnon Beaton] got me to record a couple of tunes with him on his album *Saturday Night Lively* to try and keep me interested."

She gave it up again until she moved to P.E.I. at 21. Then she became gung-ho.

A couple of Andrea's compositions appear on the new album, including a clog she wrote for

her father's 50th birthday. Kinnon and Betty Beaton, her parents, are regular players in Inverness County, where there is a square dance every summer night.

"Dances are my first love. Concerts are a lot more work mentally, because you have to put on a show. A dance is a lot of sweat, but as long as you can make people hoot and holler, you're doing good."

James Hill

By Patrick Langston

Buck up, my fumbled-fingered friend. For less than the price of a decent case of beer, even you can now be the life of the party. Just ask James Hill, renowned as the Jimi Hendrix of the ukulele. "When people get a uke in their hands, they do feel as if they can't do much wrong," says Hill. "Even when you strum the open strings all at once it sounds fine."

But don't underestimate the humble uke, even the \$29.95 version. While the diminutive instrument may be novice-friendly, it's also capable of unexpected subtlety and elegance.

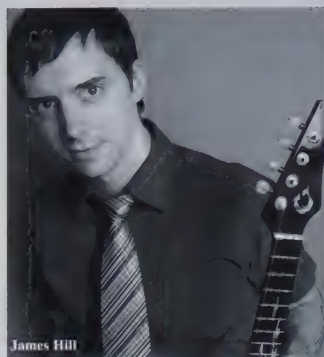
For proof, check out a Hill's third album, *A Flying Leap* (Borealis). Fun tunes like *Never on Sunday* and the jazzy *Fleas My Dog Has* abound, but so do such pieces as *One Small Suite for Ukulele*, with wife and frequent playing partner Anne Davison on cello, and *Down Rideau Canal*, a sparkling toast to winter skating on the waterway that bisects Ottawa, the Langley, BC-born Hill's current home.

Surprise and delight pepper a Hill concert. Often prejudging the instrument as a novelty item thanks to the plastic ukulele craze that swept the U.S. in the 1950s, audiences, says Hill, are astounded by the repertoire possible on the uke: "I thought it was going to be *this* but now you're showing me it's *that*." That is tremendously entertaining.

Hill's affair with the ukulele (pronounced oo-koo-lay-lay) began at age nine. His school, like many in Langley, had included mandatory uke instruction for years, and the young Hill was immediately smitten by the instrument. Now the rest of us are cottoning to his enthusiasm.

Kids plunk them in school stairwells. Crash barriers protect The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain when it performs in uke-crazed Japan. Even *SpongeBob SquarePants* plays one.

"It's not wrong to say it's a ukulele revolution," says Hill. The excitement started about three decades ago, he explains, in the instrument's birthplace, Hawaii, with the resurgence of native culture after years of U.S.-induced homogenization. The boom has apparently sub-



sided in Hawaii, with the instrument now securely lodged in mainstream culture.

"Although we've had flirtations with the ukulele in popular culture throughout the 20th century, I don't think we've ever seen the kind of grassroots movement we have now."

The uke's future? It, and his own, are rosy, says Hill. "That's my gamble and I'm sticking to it."

Winterfolk V

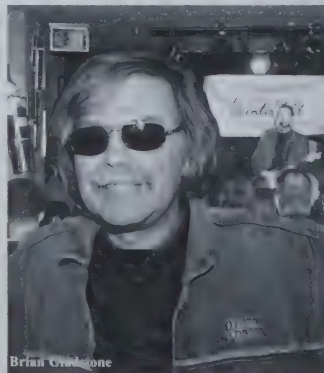
By David McPherson

Brian Gladstone, a child of the folk revolution of the '60s, was bred on Dylan. Forty years on, he still sports the hippie-long locks as a physical reminder to this seminal time in roots music. Meeting the founder of Winterfolk for a pint, one learns how this former design and research engineer gave up a six-figure day job to pursue his passion. "It's a vision I had," he says. "It's one of those spur-of-the-moment things that came to me and it has taken on a momentum of its own."

What Gladstone did with this musical momentum, from the outset, was try to emulate a



Andrea Beaton



Brian Gladstone

summer festival. He lined up a bunch of venues in close proximity on the Danforth, in Toronto's East End, so people could walk from stage to stage and venue to venue. "You have to be there to experience it. There is a magic in the air. Everybody on the street is a Winterfolk person ... it's quite an energetic time."

As a musician with four albums to his credit, Gladstone understood how hard it is for roots musicians to make ends meet, especially in the winter. Now in its fifth year, Winterfolk does its part by providing a stage to some of these struggling artists.

This year, over the course of three days (Feb. 9-11), more than 80 artists will hit the stages at a half dozen clubs at what Gladstone now bills as a roots and blues festival.

And, borrowing another key mantra from the '60s, the three-day fest this year is free.

Gladstone reveals this decision was reached to appease the club owners since they felt many attendees, after spending the money to get into their bar, were not spending any more cash on drinks, so the club owners were losing revenue.

"The only way to work in harmony with these venues and not interfere with their business was to make it a free festival. It will be a struggle, but it's something I have to do. I believe it will help the festival expand and increase its longevity."

Dale Nikkel

By Patrick Langston

Dale Nikkel owes Ralph Klein big time.

In 2002, Nikkel, then a novice Edmonton high school teacher and seasoned singer/songwriter, found himself in a school gym with hundreds of other angry teachers who had hit the bricks in a bitter labour dispute with the Klein government.

The penny dropped, says Nikkel from his cur-

rent home in Kitchener, ON, and he quickly wrote *Wishing Well*, a song of support for his fellow teachers. Word got out about this young, personable guy composing modern-day folk songs about labour issues. Soon, Nikkel was accepting invitations to perform at teachers' conventions.

"I started thinking, 'Hey, this is what folk music's all about.' I'd been reading about Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, and it seemed like exactly what had been going on 50 years ago. They were singing about the miners and farmers. Here we have a group that's frustrated, and putting their experiences into song is why it's so popular with teachers."

Nikkel, who recently released *Passages*, his fourth CD of folk-pop tunes, has since written half-a-dozen commissioned tunes about the working life.

Working in Emergency is among them.

Nikkel scoured chat rooms and blogs to explore the lives of emergency room nurses.

Debuting the song at the National Emergency Nurses 2005 convention: "[It] was one of the highest points of my career. They gave me a Hollywood-style standing ovation, tears in their eyes."

Nikkel, a triple Prairie Music Award nominee for his 2002 album *Still Learning Tricks*, has also begun marketing himself as a Songwriter on the Hot Seat. Hired for conferences, he chats up attendees, scurries back to his hotel room at night, and pulls together a song for performance the next day.

"I sit through many people who are not giving me anything to work with, and then one slight angle and the song comes."

Nikkel, a father of two who works days as an advertising copywriter, is uncertain how far he can push his songwriting ambitions. On the other hand, "I read that there's a million Canadians depressed at work. There's not a lot of miners or farmers around anymore. This is the new face of labour."

Kutapira

By Tony Montague

A few years ago a group of Vancouver school kids formed a marimba band to fight the infectious dance music of Zimbabwe. Jabulani put out an impressive self-titled album, visited Cuba, and created a stir in local world music circles with their precocious skills. When the ensemble split up in 2004, three members decided to stay together and delve further into the music they'd been exposed to in the Caribbean.

Kutapira, now an eight-piece band, is forging



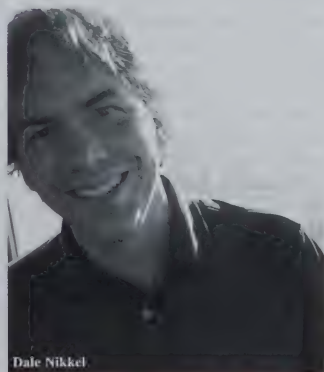
a new variety of ethno-fusion. "There are lots of marimba bands, but we're the only ones to introduce an Afro-Cuban element in what we do," says Theo Vincent, interviewed in multi-cultural East Vancouver. "We've got a drum kit, congas and djembes, and on some songs we play up to five marimbas of various sizes. We all take turns playing the different instruments."

Vincent and his colleagues have been taught by several of BC's top world-music artists: Zimbabwean exiles and marimba masters Pasipamire Gunguwo and Garadziva Chigamba, and percussionists Jack Duncan and Myles Bigelow. Their skills have developed rapidly, and this summer Kutapira went into the studio to record its self-titled debut disc.

"Most of what we play is based on traditional African songs—mainly from Zimbabwe but we also have one piece from Mozambique and one from South Africa. We add Caribbean percussion rhythms such as Cuban timba and Puerto Rican bomba to make something unique."

Kutapira's original core trio of Vincent, Sanguito Bigelow (Myles's younger brother) and Chris Couto are more than just talented instrumentalists. They've also started composing their own material for the band, and Vincent is already passing on his knowledge and skills to a still-younger generation.

"I'm the artistic director of a group of 10 kids, aged from nine to 14, called Kanaka who are studying in the world music program at Britannia [high school], and I really enjoy doing that. There should be more world music in schools—it's easier to learn than classical music, and a number of students would rather take African drumming than clarinet or whatever. From the very start you're playing songs people can dance to rather than doing scales and exercises, and that's really inspiring for kids."



Dale Nikkel

Tubthumbing



Ralph McTell

Back Tracking

The Journey, a new box set from English songwriting icon Ralph McTell, revisits the Streets of London and other landmarks defining a celebrated career. Ken Hunt steps back in time on a voyage of discovery.

Ralph McTell belongs to the premier league of singer-songwriters. Perhaps not the highest of the high kind, that pantheon reserved for the ballyhooed Jovian few. More like, to give a Canadian comparison, Ian Tyson. Like Tyson, he has created a body of enduring work that has travelled to wherever English-language song is listened to. Yet hundreds of songs into the game, McTell is, like Tyson, someone damn close to that exalted pantheon. As never before, comprehending and appreciating what McTell achieved – and how he did it – is simple. His 66-track career retrospective, *The Journey*, reacquaints you with the songs that made his name, some in unfamiliar versions, with a leavening of covers, alternative performances and songs you never knew.

Ralph McTell, the elder of two sons, was born Ralph May in December 1944 in Farnborough in the so-called Garden of England, Kent. His father ran off after Ralph's brother, Bruce, was born in 1946, leaving their mother, Winifred, to raise them. At Wizz Jones's suggestion, he took his stage name from Blind Willie McTell. Now,

in my opinion, Jones is, permit me to repeat myself, one of the four wellspring creators of Britain's acoustic folk guitar. Since you ask, the others are Davey Graham, Martin Carthy and Bert Jansch. Everything flows from them. Everything can be traced back to them. On his 19th birthday, McTell, as he shall henceforth be known, got a copy of Davy (as it was then spelled) Graham and Alexis Korner's EP *3/4 AD* as a present. He mastered Graham's finger-nasty *Angi* just like his cranium and fingers absorbed blues and ragtime styles.

McTell followed in the footsteps of Alex Campbell, Graham and Jones by travelling to continental Europe, shedding English inhibitions in order to make street music in Paris for his daily pain. Along the way he started writing songs, entering the folkie consciousness with two albums in one year – *Eight Frames A Second* and *Spiral Staircase* – though *The Journey* includes four recordings that predate his 1968 flurry. Paris surfaces in his songs, but his 1995 vignette, *Rue de la Montagne St Genevieve*, while drenched in Latin Quarter high hopes set in a Montaigne-Ste-Genevieve hotel, is a million miles from the events that played out in Paris in the year of his recording breakthrough.

After talking about our mothers, women of a similar age and background, I ask what insights into his own creative process he's gained from *The Journey*: "We have to go back to my per-

ceived role for myself. I think that it is not a keeper of the scrolls or the tradition, or a protector of the tradition; it is the belief that there is a basic honesty in one man and a guitar if the subject matter is right. My stimulus is drawn from men and women who appeared to do that for me. All, I think, I sought to do while I was doing that was to get better at what I was doing. Which is partly to enjoy and to discover the music myself and to exploit what little I have or what my offering could be and to try to improve. But not to lose sight entirely of what first motivated me. The odd excursion I have made into a broader folk-rock field or whatever was all done with the same intent. The idea of doing songs in the main still had to fit those criteria."

The opportunity to present this body of work in a new way adds plentiful insights into the sheer variety of his output. *Keeping The Night At Bay* from *Tickle On The Tum* (1986) is pure domesticity with its litany of children's excuses for putting off the inevitability of bedtime. *Peppers And Tomatoes* (from *Sand In Your Shoes*, 1995), dowsed in the terror and foulness that came to be known by that sanitized euphemism 'ethnic cleansing', has a couple of seemingly throwaway, devil-in-the-minutiae ideas that may pass non-Europeans by. Old certainties go to the wind. As they did in his English Civil War playlet *Red And Gold* popularised by Fairport Convention and presented here in a new solo version. Only in *Peppers And Tomatoes* he uses a charged European image of cultural divide by having the narrator bring wine to the table at the café and finding his neighbours drinking beer and, later, singing songs unsettling in their newness.

As compiler David Suff and biographer Paul O Jenkins have so sumptuously laid it out, *The Journey* is the first time that McTell's overall canon can be understood in one serving. *Nanna's Song*, for example, benefits from its before-and-after treatments. "Then" was his *Eight Frames A Second* version; "now" is one from 1999. He agrees, "When I wrote that song I wrote it how you hear it the second time. When I took it to the studio, they went, 'Oh God, it's French! We've got to put some accord on it.' It was all a kind of musical cliché. Actually that song on that first album probably sold the album. Because I think it was an honest intent. It's a wistful song that deals with meeting and parting somehow. Are they still together? Do you know what happened? If some-

one were to study that song I hope they would see it's not just a song about being in love in Paris. It's a song of regret that things are coming to a close — though they never did. But that's the perception of the song at the time." He and Nanna married and remain married...

"I've got this thing," he volunteers, "about songs. If you get it straightaway, it's one kind of song; if it creeps into you, it's another song; if you return to a song, it's another. I picked a quote up the other day from Samuel Taylor Coleridge: it's the poems we go back to, to read again that are the special ones. I would like my songs to be thought of like that. I would like it would be possible to go back to them and find something that you didn't get the first time."

For me, *The Journey* works as only Linda Ronstadt's 1999 Box Set has worked. Neither are nostalgic trips. Both are voyages of discovery.

Strange Brew

Crooked Still ferment old-time mountain music with bluegrass, newgrass, rock 'n' roll and 19th-century hymns. David MacPherson toasts this potent elixir bottled in Boston.

Take a four-finger-style banjo player with a PhD in molecular biology, add a cello player with a love of bluegrass and pair them with a soulful singer and a bassist and what does one get?

Crooked Still — a Boston-based band of acoustically inclined lovers of old-time mountain music, who are slowly building a grassroots following.

Dr. Gregory Liszt is the banjo player with the doctorate, who in between Crooked Still gigs sidelined with Bruce Springsteen's *Seeger Sessions* touring band last summer. Liszt learned to play his chosen instrument and developed his unique four-finger rolls in a lab while waiting for experiments "to happen." Rushad Eggleston is the cellist, Aoife O'Donovan the vocalist, and Corey DiMario the bassist. Thrown together, this foursome produces some arresting music by reinventing timeless tunes, folk classics and other traditionals found in the American songbook, and by using Bela Fleck, Jerry Douglas, Sam Bush and Edgar Meyer as modern touchstones.

Crooked Still released its debut disc, *Hop High*, independently at the Falcon Ridge Folk Festival in July 2004. Led by the band's first arrangement—the bluegrass classic *Darling Corey*—it was the top-selling CD at that year's fest. For their follow-up, and major-label debut, *Shaken By A Low Sound*—released last fall on Signature Sounds—the foursome tackle songs by the likes of Bob

Dylan, Bill Monroe and Robert Johnson, while seeking some divine inspiration from the pages of the 19th-century American hymnal, *The Sacred Harp*.

Catching up with three of the four members of Crooked Still finds them waiting to claim their baggage at the airport, heading home after a folk festival in Southern Ontario—one of many dates across North America and Europe they hopped to and fro from in 2006. As the cellphone gets passed around, the trio talk about their formation, reinterpreting timeless songs and their take on the current roots, folk and bluegrass scenes.

From higher education to a higher musical calling, fate brought together these friends of folk more than five years ago to sculpt, and to play, a new breed of alternative bluegrass. At the time, O'Donovan and DiMario were classmates at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, MA. These two musical mates were unaware that just across the Charles River, dwelling in the laboratories of MIT, was an aspiring four-finger banjo player, and a young cellist who was a graduate of the Berklee College of Music.

"Corey and I were playing a lot of folk music, Irish music and klezmer music together," explains O'Donovan, describing the band's beginnings.

"Rushad at the time was starting to get known as this bluegrass cellist... Greg was just a biology student who was slowly developing this new way of playing the banjo with four fingers. We were all doing our own thing.

"We met at this party, jammed, and then ended up doing an impromptu concert. It was less like, 'Let's start a band with a cello and a weird banjo

and a singer and a bass,' and more like, 'This is really fun to make music with the four of us.' It wasn't exactly like anything else that was being offered at the time. I was listening to old Doc Watson recordings and to *Darling Corey* and I said to the guys 'Let's do a song,' and that was our first arrangement. It progressed from there."

From nowhere to there, nestled somewhere between "newgrass," "bluegrass," and old-time mountain music with rock 'n' roll soul, is where one locates Crooked Still's sound.

"We all grew up with the rock music of the '90s and that is definitely going to come out in the music we are playing," O'Donovan says. "Rashad says that old-time music is the original rock music. If you are at an old-time jam, it is rock 'n' roll as you are just sitting there, the bass is going, the fiddle is going, it's constant, it's in time, it's stuff that is being repeated over and over and over again. That's what rock is and that's where it comes from... to us, an old-time jam rocks as hard as heavy metal."

Speaking of old-time music, Crooked Still also reinvent two songs from *The Sacred Harp* on *Shaken By A Low Sound*. O'Donovan explains that *The Sacred Harp* is "a book of hymns from all along the eastern United States that have such a rich singing tradition."

"I took one of those songs (*Ecstasy*), rewrote the melody and changed the rhythms and that song is one of my favorites on the album," she adds.

"What we did with it is definitive of what Crooked Still is about."

O'Donovan credits the web as a vehicle, which



Crooked Still

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Tubthumping

has helped not only Crooked Still, but also all acoustically inclined bands find a broader audience. "I have a little sister who is 13 and she plays her friends my songs and then her friends put the Crooked Still song on their MySpace page and then other teenagers go listen to it. It's cool how it is seeping down to a younger generation."

In between gaining younger fans and mastering old-time jams, Crooked Still signed with Signature Sounds in October 2005 while attending the International Bluegrass Music Association's annual conference. *Shaken By a Low Sound* was produced by Lee Townsend and recorded in California. "Most of the stuff that he has done has been jazz-based," O'Donovan says. "He hasn't done too much bluegrass or string-band music, but having him there gave us another flavour to work with. He was really focused on sound and laying us back a little bit, so we didn't go play super fast and go crazy on super solos."

A little old, a little new, a little borrowed, and a little bluegrass sums up Crooked Still's parts, but let's leave the final word on what these New England roots lovers are all about to celtist Eggleston.

"We are making a new sculpture out of the same old clay," he says.

Buzz Cuts

Damien Barber and his Demon Barbers combine traditional English folk songs and Morris dance tunes with ska, reggae and dub. The world might just about be ready for them, reckons Chris Nickson

Sometimes a name gets picked up by the radar, but never seems to really go far. Then, all of a sudden, it's soaring, and there's a buzz happening.

That's been the case with English folk singer Damien Barber. With the release of his latest album, *Waxed*, by his band, the Demon Barbers, and the heavy touring schedule of the all-singing, all-dancing Demon Barber Roadshow, he's making a big impact in English music.

For Damien it all began as a boy in rural Norfolk, where "my dad was into Dylan and traditional music. He used to take me to the Orchard Folk Club in Northwalsam. So from when I was five I heard great music, people like Tony Hall and Walter Pardon. My dad played melodeon, but he wouldn't let me touch it. But when I was seven, we were at a party, and I knew he'd had a few drinks, so I picked it up and played a tune properly – I'd been watching and learning. From there as I got older I played youth clubs and folk clubs. At 17, I was playing concertina and singing. I went on to college because it seemed like the best option, but I ended up at the Young Tradition Awards from this terrible tape I'd sent in. Then at 18, I went professional and performed solo for the next 10 or 11 years."

He spent five of those years in Ireland, where "I lived halfway up a mountain with no electricity." It was a good time, sitting in on sessions, playing gigs, and learning about Irish music from local players. But eventually he moved back, settling in the West Yorkshire town of Keighley, close to the home of the Brönte parsonage in Haworth.

"When I moved back, I learnt guitar and got back into the festival circuit. I also became more involved in the scene, especially with the dancing."

English dancing has an undeservedly bad reputation compared to other styles – like the step dancing from Ireland or Quebec, for example. To some, the Morris dancers look silly. But it's an old, highly articulate art form, as much a part of the folk tradition as music or storytelling.

Through friends, Barber became involved with the Black Swan Rappers, a dance group, when they formed, "then they won the Open Championship for the next three years."

Soon Barber had an established spot at the annual Whitby Folk Festival on the Yorkshire coast. Rather than play solo, he made it the "Damien Barber and Friends Show." As part of it, he asked his friends to come and dance, and got people like accordionist John Kirkpatrick, one of the leading players of dance music, to help out.

From there, Barber took off on a solo tour.

"I went to the States and played with Cordelia's Dad. They were great, and they inspired me to come back and form a band." He did that, playing Whitby again with the band and dancers – "it was rough as you like" – and things were off and running. From there it's grown as they've honed the show. There's Morris dancing, clogging, and plenty of powerhouse music, from a band whose bassist isn't even into folk music.

The Roadshow itself is very physical and highly choreographed. But it's not Riverdance, by any means. Everything is much rawer and real, and often flies by the seat of its pants. But Barber is very aware that the band exists apart from the Roadshow.

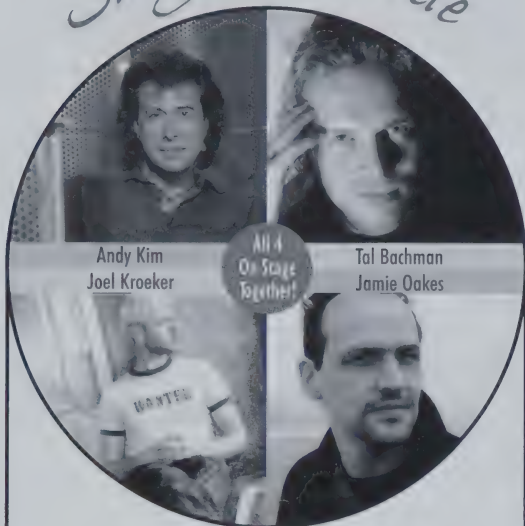
"I'm quite conscious about promoting the Roadshow, but serious about the band as well." That's apparent on *Waxed*, where they tackle some big songs, including the epic ballad *The Famous Flower Of Serving Men*. But it's hardly straightforward, going into reggae, dub, and building fast and furious with ska. Unlikely, but it works.

"It was a challenge. We had to make it interesting. When we go into the ska, after nine verses, there's still so many left! We couldn't keep it all ska. So we build it up through the dub and come back in double time, but with the slow bass underneath."



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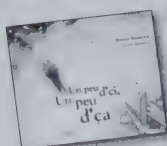


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This is passionate music, not all traditional (there's an excellent version of Barry Dransfield's *The Werewolf*, for example), all with a fairly Northern bent. It's not perfect, but it gives a real indication of what the band is like and "hopefully we can trust our artistic direction. We're getting there as a band both musically and financially. But we can't afford to tour full time."

He's also considering the next move for the Roadshow.

"We need a new show to take it to the next level. I saw *Stomp!* recently and that was great. It would be great if we could get a number of roadshows touring doing theatres, changing shows yearly. But for now the question is how to make it bigger without it being a load of wank."

Essentially, Barber sees the band and the Roadshow "continuing as two separate but connected entities." That's natural. The band can be more flexible, while the Roadshow has reached the point where it needs larger venues, especially if a new, grander show emerges.

But it's obvious that Damien Barber, the Demon Barbers, and the Roadshow, have well and truly arrived. And having that range of options gives him the chance to tour more widely – especially as getting the Roadshow to somewhere like Canada would be an expensive and logistically complex operation. But it might yet happen, all things being equal. There was plenty of interest shown when Barber displayed his wares – on DVD only – at the annual WOMEX conference, held in England this year and covering the gamut of world music. The world might just be ready for the innate Englishness song and dance of the Demon Barber Roadshow.

Solitary Man

Ken Hamm draws on isolation for inspiration. From his home base in a rural community on Vancouver Island he has developed into one of North America's largely unsung acoustic, folk-blues greats, writes our Roger Levesque.

Call it "raw and real".

In speaking with Ken Hamm recently about his roots, there were several times when he used that phrase to describe artists who inspired him way back when.

Today those words say so much about the country folk-blues sound that Hamm spins from his guitars, banjo and dulcimer, and from his nimble vocal presence, mellow but upbeat. Even when he's sliding into a classic delta



Ken Hamm

blues number, the man is, in his own strange way, as authentic as they come.

You have to understand that – but for a few short transitional periods, and his tours – Hamm has spent almost his whole life living in rural climes, drawing on the relative isolation and the quiet strength of the land to help his creative focus.

"I don't really get along in cities very well," he admits. "I'm a bit of a solitary type who craves isolation and that helps the music. I think every artist needs some kind of solitary space to create."

It's no surprise that when the Canadian government sent Hamm to represent his country at the Festival of Plucked Strings in Morocco in 2000, he felt a profound connection to the centuries-old sound of the native Gnawa musicians at the event. Blues spirit – of whatever ethnicity – is as old as human nature.

Of course there's much more than a down-to-earth demeanour behind Hamm's sound. Check his recent double-disc, 32-song tour de force, *Live '05* (from Northtrack/Festival) and you will quickly be impressed with the sheer technical finesse of his finger-picking slide style and his gift for tapping deep feelings. He's one of North America's largely unsung folk-blues greats.

While *Live '05* was drawn from a series of mixed concerts last year, Hamm chose to divide up the material for his fans.

Disc one is made up mostly of blues covers, from the royalty of delta blues like Robert Johnson and Mississippi John Hurt, to later forces like Willie Dixon and Chuck Berry. Hamm rarely worries about sticking to the orig-

inals, preferring to leave his own stamp, and he conjures up some marvelous, intricate interpretations in the process, with superb slide work in the bargain.

The blues disc starts with Blind Lemon Jefferson's *Bad Luck Blues* and Hamm's story about the day he was informed the tune had won him a Juno Award – it was included in an award-winning CBC Radio's Saturday Night Blues anthology. That very same day his mail included a note from Revenue Canada suggesting he should give up on his musical career and make it a hobby.

The second disc is almost all originals, tunes drawn from everyday life. If the song forms are looser, then the emotional terrain shows greater peaks and valleys too, and again, that pull of the land.

"Sometimes songs just burst forth, while you can labour at others for years and years (laughs). I guess they all come from the various experiences on the road, people I met, up and downs and ins and outs, all those things in life that intrigue you. I'm always thinking about song ideas and taking notes."

He wanted to put out the live album for a few reasons. He sees it as kind of a summary of where he's been musically with some updates of key material. It's also collected to help out the increasing demand for his role as a teacher in private lessons, guitar camps and workshops, and finally, he acknowledges that "live performances bring out a whole other side of me."

Hamm was born in Thunder Bay, ON, in 1947 and grew up in a logging camp around the town, initially raised on a musical diet of the folk and country his parents enjoyed. He recalls he always had an "urge to play", and that grew

Tubthumping

even stronger when he heard more contemporary sounds like rock 'n' roll. He was 14 when his grandmother got him a real guitar.

One summer, listening to a radio broadcast all the way from Chicago he experienced an epiphany like so many other members of his generation: Bob Dylan.

"He blew me away. He was doing some kind of talking blues and it was just so different and so un-commercial compared to all the other kind of slick foursomes and trios that were out then. So I was like, 'Holy cow!'"

A search for more folk music took him to the town's music store where he stumbled upon records by Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Tom Rush, John Hammond, Jimmy Reed, and acts that were cross-pollinating folk and blues like the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, and Seigel-Schwartz Band.

For an out-of-the-way logging centre Thunder Bay was one hip little town in the mid-1960s, complete with seven coffee houses that hosted music (in one, dubbed the Fourth Dimension, Neil Young met Stephen Stills for the first time). Hamm put in his first performances in the same coffee houses before he was out of high school.

After honing his own technique over a series of solitary summers on a far-flung geology job, Hamm returned to Thunder Bay to form the Bay Street Blues Band, a successful group that often played six nights a week (it featured Laurie Cooper who later joined Parachute Club). After six years leading the group he put out his first solo album, *Ken Hamm & Friends*,

in 1978.

A thirst for wider opportunities took him first to Calgary, and then to tour through the music circuit across British Columbia and over to Vancouver Island. Eventually Hamm moved to a small village named Cedar on the island where he's been since the early 1980s, balancing his work as a musical troubadour in the spring and summer with forestry during the winters.

During the 1990s he put out a new recording every couple of years, gradually building serious acclaim with guitar enthusiasts across the continent. The solo blues album *Galvanized* (1998) and the instrumental *Fingerlicks* (2003; both on Northtracks via Festival Distribution) count as highlights.

In 2003 Hamm's wife of 25 years, Lynn Wallace, died after a prolonged battle with cancer. He says it was "just about the worst thing that ever happened to me", but allows the emotional weight of his music has deepened as a result. Now his life is in transition again as he plans to settle in small-town Saskatchewan in a few years.

One thing you can be sure of is that the music will never leave him. As Hamm heads towards his 60th birthday next year, he's sounding as inventive as ever.

"I've been able to make a living playing acoustic music, to grow as an artist, to live in a rural situation, to hang out with people who play banjos and fiddles and mandolins, and still keep my interest in country blues up to write a few songs along the way. The music has always been there for me."

The Bull's Bollocks

An odd delicacy a prairie oyster—a deep-fried testicle of a sheep, bull or boar, apparently. Exceedingly more palatable, however, is the veteran country-roots band Prairie Oyster. After an extended recording sabbatical, they return with an impressive new disc, One Kiss. Peter North minds his table manners.

Eight years after the release of *What Is This Country*, many fans were asking, "Where is Prairie Oyster?"

Ask no more. The rootsy country band that had a firm lock on radio play for a decade, starting in the mid-'80s, is back with a recording that is an instant reminder of why the quintet's sound has continually transcended trends.

The Oysters remain a source of inspiration to those of us who bend our ears the band's way, and to musical peers on both sides of the border.

A dozen songs ride under the banner *One Kiss*, their new disc. It is a first-rate collection of material from sources inside and outside the band that, just for starters, binds Cajun sounds with bluesy laments. There's a Dylan chestnut, and a soulful country tune from yesteryear courtesy of Don Gibson's deep catalogue.

"We've never been a group of musicians who would just put out a disc of random filler or just crank out one album a year for the sake of making a record," says pianist and tunesmith Joan Besen, who has been a cornerstone of the Oyster sound for almost 30 years.

The band helped shore up what could be very vacuous country radio airwaves with tunes like



Prairie Oyster

Tubthumping

Juke Joint Johnny; Such A Lonely One; One Way Track; Black Eyed Susan; Lonely You Lonely Me; and Goodbye, So Long, Hello. Finding themselves without a major record deal forced the Oysters to evaluate when and how they should congregate and return to business in the new millennium.

"We were a bit mystified and there was touch of psychological fear about producing ourselves and how we would react to each others direction in the studio," recalls Besen, who contributed three songs to the album – *Drown Your Own Sorrows, Short Time Here, and I Wish I'd Never Known Love* that she also took the lead vocal on.

When group guitarist Keith Glass became a partner in the Audio Valley Recording Studio in Perth, ON, it opened the door for the group to start recording songs they had worked on live.

"That we were able to construct new material and road-test songs live was also a real advantage. We were able to invite friends at festivals to join in on performances, one of the more memorable being a show at Mariposa two years ago where Gurf Morlix, Colin Linden and some horn players sat in with us. We had

three fiddles on stage at one point in the set," recalled the one-time member of Sylvia Tyson's Great Speckled Bird.

Besen also feels that once the band had committed itself to recording there was less pressure when it came to choosing the material.

"It was actually easy and basically came down to Russell (deCarle), Keith and myself. In the case of my material, I can never be certain that a song is written or destined for Prairie Oyster. Of course, I can hear Russell singing certain things, but over the years I've come to learn that you just never know. I never would have guessed that he would have jumped on *Black Eyed Susan* that Ron Hynes and I wrote in the '90s which ended up on the *Only One Moon* album," admits Besen.

"The main reason I ended up singing *I Wish I'd Never Known Love* on the new album is because Russell didn't relate to the lyrics," said Besen, who went on to discuss the New Orleans vibe that surfaces on a number of tracks on the disc, including the opener, a remake of *That's My Home*.

The tune, while traditional, had its last great reading back in 1977 when Levon Helm and

Doctor John collaborated on a stunning arrangement for Helm's RCO All-Stars project.

Oyster's version sticks to the fine arrangement by the good doctor and the man who was the voice of The Band, and deCarle stamps an equally convincing vocal onto the song, which features surges of horns. Chris Whiteley's trumpet and Frank Barth's trombone, along with Dennis Delorme's pedal steel licks, complete the string of musical exclamation marks in the tight-knit arrangement.

Besen didn't need to, but offered a reminder that the heartbeat of New Orleans has always had a place in the Oyster's multi-layered sound.

"It's not a sudden pandering in the wake of what has happened in Louisiana. I remember New Orleans sounds being some of the first things I heard as a kid," says Besen, who has helped Oyster inject everything from New Orleans R&B to Cajun cut-ups into the band's set lists over the years.

That the band settled on Bob Dylan's *I Threw It All Away*, the centrepiece of *Nashville Skyline*, and a tune by Calgary's Steve Pinco called *Too Bad For Me* confirms that soulful country music with real roots is in safe hands.

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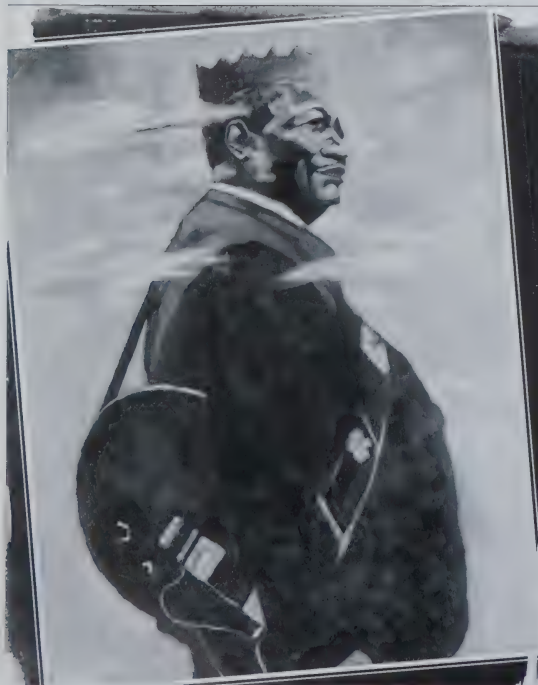
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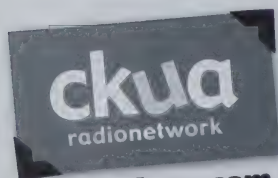


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Oyster's Keith Glass remembers catching Pineo for the first time over a decade ago in Cowtown, and being immediately blown away.

"It was during Country Music Week and a few of us were pointed in the direction of this little club called Kaos. Steve blew us away and had a batch of great originals and covered really hip tunes. Russell and I couldn't shut up about him the next day, and we've intended on cutting *Too Bad For Me* for a while," says Glass about Pineo, who was a member of the popular Co-Dependents, fronted by the legendary Billy Cowsill until he passed away earlier this year. Pineo also wrote *Canadian Man*, which ended up in the hands of Paul Brandt a few years ago.

Both Besen and Glass are convinced that deCarle is singing better than ever, and those two aforementioned songs back that notion up.

"Russell has always been an incredibly gifted singer, but it's almost like there has been some sort of breakthrough to another level," Besen feels.

"Technically his control is exceptional and his delivery is so smooth. But he's decorating things emotionally like I've never heard him do before. Keith's guitar playing is something else on this record to," says Besen, who points to the six-stringed undertow and solos Glass lays down on tunes like Don Gibson's *Sweet, Sweet Girl To Me*. Having just played for fans and friends at Hugh's Room in Toronto and officially releasing the disc, Besen is optimistic about this chapter in the Oyster's long journey.

"It's not like we ever fit the sonic landscape

of commercial country music radio before, even though we had our successes there. Maybe there is no room left for us there anymore, but our fans are very loyal and we're still a good hard ticket act. We were just reminded of that on a tour out West where we sold out almost every night, and we'll just keep going at it the way we always have."

Cultural Ecology

Mathieu Fortier founded three schools – two in Quebec and one in India – to teach disadvantaged children traditional music. Mary Beth Carty sits down with this amazing man to hear about Jeunes Musiciens du Monde.

Mathieu Fortier barely has time to eat these days. With one week left before two colossal fundraising shows featuring 15 well-known Montreal-based groups and artists including Yves Lambert, Papillon and Afrodizz, he sounds exhausted.

The founder of Jeunes Musiciens du Monde counts on these two shows, one which takes place in Montreal and the other in Quebec City, for 50 per cent of his budget to run three schools of traditional music, one in each of the aforementioned cities, the third outside the city of Dharwad, India.

Founded in 2001, the boarding school in India lodges, nourishes, teaches and cares for 90 young people who study Indian classical music and regular school subjects six days a week. The

students come from lower castes and are not required to pay.

In Quebec City and Montreal, after-school courses in traditional Quebecois music are offered, free. Located in areas with statistically high rates of poverty, crime and violence, these schools allow disadvantaged children to take group and private lessons in violin, flute, guitar, piano, singing, percussion, composition and theory.

"For us it's an exercise of cultural ecology," Mathieu enthuses. "Just as there are endangered species in wildlife, there are endangered species in culture and music. If we don't make a move to protect and promote the traditions of this planet, many of them are bound to disappear. We have confidence that these kids have the strength and personality to take these cultures on their shoulders and make them live, if we give them the right tools to do it."

In 1991, Mathieu left Quebec to travel throughout Asia. He fell in love with India, bought some tapes of Indian classical music, and returned to Canada to study anthropology. A year and a half later, he returned to do research and stayed.

"That's when the idea of learning the Indian classical music really came to me. Not everyone understands Indian music the first time they listen to it. It's not about catchy melodies, it's more a deep meditation on the nature of sound.

"I spent many years learning the music, getting involved with the culture at large and learning languages. I was trying to convince my brother to visit me. So in 2000 he first came there and I moved to a city called Dharwad, which is not huge, but has a very large musician's community. It's one of the lighthouses of Indian classical music, this town. After a while, I wanted to open an evening school for kids, which was not a formal move – we didn't have an organization or anything, we just did it. And that's where we realized it could become a vocation. We rented a farm with the idea of turning that into a boarding school where kids could spend half the time doing music and half the time doing general education."

Eleven students grew to 20, to 60, to 90. "Since then we left for a new ground, we have more than 20 buildings, most of them are mud huts with a tiled roof. We have three larger buildings made of bricks."

Today, the teachers at the school are some of the most respected musicians in India. "At first, because it was out in the forest, musicians were



Tubthumping

not eager to come and teach there." They first hired some talented music students who were studying under guru Somanath Mardur. Eventually the guru himself agreed to come.

Besides harmonium, the children can study percussion, sitar, dance, violin and voice. "Vocal music is king in India," attests Mathieu. "That's what people want to listen to and perform the most."

As you can imagine, there are many success stories. Mathieu encouraged the resident cook, the wife of an abusive alcoholic, to send her 12-year-old daughter to the school instead of having her work as a servant for rich families. "When she came to the school she was definitely one of the rougher students. She had not been socialized because she had never even gone to the village school. She complained to her mom and decided to leave. I was disappointed, but these things happen. After a while she came back, and became much more motivated. There is a huge change in her personality and the perception she has of herself. She is no more a tough alley girl with no education trying to survive for a living, she's a student, and on top of that, a music student. She is very dynamic and a good example for the other students."

While in India, Mathieu met his wife and project partner, Agathe Meurisse from France, who had originally come to work in an orphanage and study languages. They now have four children and spend most of their time living and working at the school. At nine, Mira, their oldest daughter, is already a singer and harmonium player of considerable talent. At 2005's benefit concert, her performance took my breath away. Like her parents, she speaks French, English, Hindi and the local language, Kannad.

Back in Quebec, perhaps the most exciting activity that takes place at the school is songwriting. Last year, four groups with 12 to 15 children each met on Thursdays to work on ensemble playing and songwriting. Four songs were created, each with a different theme chosen democratically by the students.

"As themes, the students chose nature and the environment, music, love and human relationships, and the last group just wanted to be funny and crazy," says Sophie, the Quebec school's director and teacher of the composition workshop. "Someone started talking about the crack in the couch and we all found that so funny that we decided that would be the theme of the song. I took notes while I listened to their ideas about what they found in the couch. Now



The Doug & Jess Band

it's a song!"

The process of writing these four songs lasted from July to June. "First, I introduced them to traditional models of songs. After we chose the theme, we brainstormed for associated words, made phrases, put them together, created a chorus. Eventually we found melodies, chords, accompaniment. It was an amazing experience." The children now perform these songs at community events.

Sophie's favourite song created in these classes is the one about relationships, primarily because the process allowed the children to express feelings they might normally have kept hidden. "Two brothers in this group were experiencing a lot of pain and heartbreak. Their father was in prison in Haiti and they never saw him. One boy had written something down but was too shy to show me. Finally he did. He had written, 'Des fois on est heureux, mais des fois on est malheureux' – sometimes we are happy, but sometimes we are unhappy. We used this as a foundation for brainstorming. The finished song is so beautiful!"

Jeunes Musiciens du Monde is changing the destinies of underprivileged children on two continents while simultaneously keeping traditional cultures alive. Donations of money and instruments are graciously accepted!

Happy Families

Mennonite culture sparked much of the creativity that eventually led to the formation of Winnipeg father-and-daughter bluegrass outfit, The Doug & Jess Band. Bob Remington considers them future stars of the folk festival circuit.

The drawback to playing music with your dad is that sometimes he acts...well, like a dad. "He can get a little possessive of me," says Jess Reimer – like when she's playing in a bar with her dad and some slobbering drunk approaches her. Dads are like that. Their daughters are always their little girls, no matter what age, and you can't really fault them for being overly protective.

Perhaps that's why there simply aren't that many father-daughter acts like The Doug & Jess Band, who have been turning heads not only for their great harmonies, but for the simple fact that most kids wouldn't be caught dead on stage with their parents.

"I still marvel at the fact that, here I am almost 60, and my daughter is not yet 30 and she's still interested in singing with me," says Doug Reimer. "I don't think it's just generosity. I've found that young people need and want

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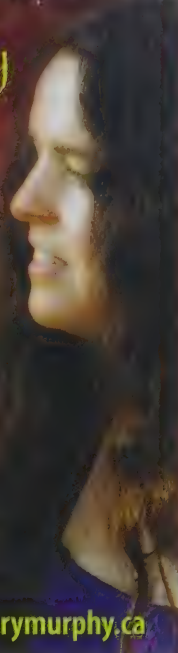
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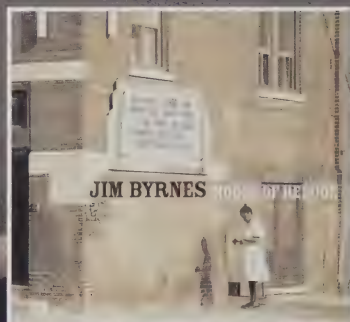
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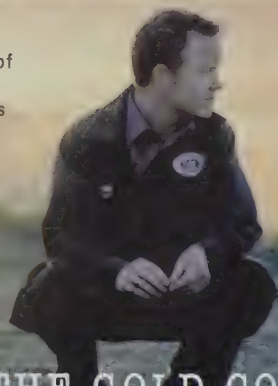
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Tubthumping

and long for some old guy to be singing the same stuff they do. It acts as an affirmation of what they have chosen."

The father-daughter combo from Winniepeg fronts a four-piece bluegrass group with a unique sound. Imagine the Louvin Brothers-meet-Gillian Welch. Palatable to folk crowds yet acceptable for the traditional bluegrass scene, The Doug and Jess Band walks a nice line between intersecting genres with traditional and self-written material. Their strong CD, *Slave to the World*, features all-original songs written by the Reimers, and there's not a clunker in the bunch. I played it repeatedly on a three-hour drive after seeing them last summer at the Shady Grove Bluegrass Festival near Nanton, AB, and honed in on two particular numbers - *Knockin'*, featuring some great high harmony by Doug, and *Milk and Honey*, a wonderful song by Jess about a woman's love for her dying husband.

Jess's music seems heavily influenced by Welch, which she accepts as a compliment. "She's absolutely my favourite songwriter. My dream is to be on stage at the Ryman with her." Encouraged by her dad to sing from an early age, she also took up songwriting at his urging. "He's an interesting guy. He's written a couple of books. We had been singing together for awhile and finally he said 'you should write a song.' So I did and he liked it. I thought, 'oh, it's just because he's my dad.' Playing with him is great because he's extremely supportive of what I do."

Doug Reimer's love for music grew out of the Mennonite culture he was born into.

"Everybody had television except for the Mennonites in my village. They didn't believe in going to shows or Saturday night dances. Mennonites didn't do that. So, instead, they would get together and their primary entertainment was to sing. My mother came from a family of 18 kids. All those uncles and aunts would get together and they'd bring out mandolins and autoharps, one guy might have a mouth organ, and they'd get together and sing gospel quartets. You see that everywhere across the face of Mennonite culture. They had to sing because they didn't watch television or go to shows. You couldn't sing harmony in church, though, because it was considered ostentatious. Strange stuff."

Later, as rules loosened, he eventually got to sing harmony in church and it was there that he was pushed into singing tenor.

"My brother was the choir conductor in our

church. There were not many tenors in our town so I had to sing higher by default. I'm not sure of what I do is falsetto or not. It's a bit of a technical question. My brother remains one of my best fans and he doesn't think I'm singing falsetto."

Whatever it is, it works. On *Knockin'*, Doug's range is remarkable. He also sings a mean blues on the original *Crossroads Blues*, a title with obvious homage to Robert Johnson, although the version on the CD doesn't quite capture the power of his voice live.

"I love singing blues. My interest in music developed from gospel and Negro spirituals."

An author and former creative writing teacher, he finds songwriting easy.

"I was a committed writer since I was a kid. I have a technique I use, but it's not only a technique. I have a desire to take a conventional idea and do something with that idea that surprises people and maybe even makes them feel a bit uncomfortable so that they're not quite sure if I am serious or not. In *Slave to This World* there's a line that says, 'When I'm gone don't pray too long.' What I'm saying is, forget the prayer, this guy's enjoying himself."

He realized early that his music and writing skill got passed on to his daughter.

"My wife and I had the bedroom upstairs from her and we could hear her singing like a lark and making up songs. She was always singing, even when her brothers didn't want her to sing. We'd be travelling and the boys wouldn't want her to sing, you know how boys are, and I would say 'I want to listen to my daughter sing. You must not stop people from singing. It is so important.' So, from four or

"My mother came from a family of 18 kids. All those uncles and aunts would get together and they'd bring out mandolins and autoharps." — Doug Reimer

five years old, she got that message from me."

Eventually, they began singing together at local fundraisers and open mics. Rounding out the band is Jeremy G. Hamm on mandolin and fiddle and Tim Osmond on banjo, with Doug on guitar and Jess on upright bass.

"We try to sound like the old bluegrassers and old-time music guys," says Doug. "My first real love was the Louvin Brothers and then the Stanley Brothers."

If there's any justice, The Doug and Jess Band should start popping up on the festival circuit this summer. There are brother-and-sister acts, (Tim and Mollie O'Brien), husbands and wives (Buddy and Julie Miller) but rarely a father and daughter. Lucinda Williams occasionally appears on stage with her father, poet Miller Williams. Bill Monroe sometimes appeared with his daughter, Melissa Monroe. But a full-time father-daughter act? That's pretty cool.

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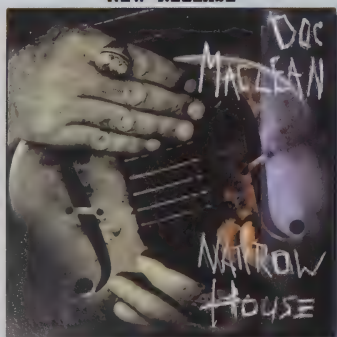


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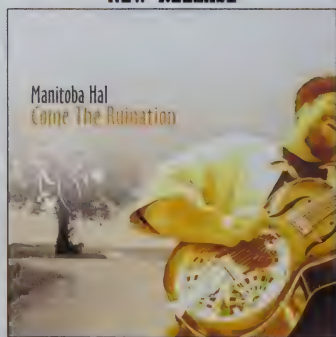
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Maize 'n' Grace

Indian Corn, the latest release from Galitcha, offers a mixture of Sikh soul and Quebecois enlightenment. Tony Montague brushes up on his ghazals and bends the ear of the band's Kuljit Sodhi.

The birth of traditional Quebecois-Punjabi cross-over music was a curious one. On the second album by the quartet Galitcha, *Célébration - Blé d'Inde (Indian Corn)*, its arrival is heralded by a flurry of accordion notes from guest musician Yves Lambert, on the title track.

The Joliette rootsman, founder and former lead-singer of La Bottine Souriante, is clearly in a heightened state of consciousness as he rambles into a spontaneous monologue - in a language best described as Frindian:

"OK, all right, ze racalam a racalam racala racala rocky racoon, ryke enna me"

Then Galitcha's leader, Kuljit Sodhi, launches into a minor-key song in Punjabi, backed by harmonium, tablas and soprano sax. The between-verses instrumental has a distinctly Celtic feel - it comes from *Hommage à André Gagnon* by über-Quebecois music legend Philippe Bruneau. Accordion, harmonium and the rest mingle lasciviously, and big-uncle Yves is soon back, this time speaking French: "Yes my friend, you like to sing the songs of your country just as I like to sing of my country, too. And if you come to my house we'll sing in harmony, joy, respect and freedom."

It's an invitation Sodhi has gladly taken up. His family emigrated from Amritsar, the

Punjabi capital, to Montreal in the mid '70s when he was eight years old, and he immediately became immersed in Canadian multiculturalism.

"I landed up in a neighbourhood called Park Extension, where all the immigrants come in," says Sodhi, who now lives in Gatineau, PQ. "At that time it was about 10 per cent South Asian and 90 per cent Greek. So it was an introduction for me to Mediterranean music. We think of India as a very dynamic culture, but it's actually quite homogeneous.

"Coming here it was fascinating to see the cultures mixing and being introduced to them, and the food, and the music. There's quite a similarity that I find between Celtic and Punjabi folk music and Quebecois and the folk songs of North America. Galitcha's first album [*Satrang*] was a kind of passport for us, but with the second one I knew that I needed to bring these musical ideas together."

Sodhi's own musical background is home-grown, with the devotional songs of the Sikh religion. "On Sunday at every Sikh temple, people are singing all the time, and whether a person is amateur or professional it's always there, with a harmonium and tabla. I learned the style called shabad, religious songs, like Hindu bhajans. Sometimes it gets quite classical, with people who are very well-known and respected, and who bring the classical and Sikh traditions of literature into the hymns."

The biggest influence on Sodhi was the late Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan - a giant in every sense of Pakistani qawwali music. Nusrat's impassioned Sufi songs struck a chord in the young musician. "I met him when I was part of a

dance troupe performing at the WOMAD festival in Toronto in 1998. I didn't officially get any learning from him, but he was motivating me to sing more and do something more."

Sodhi, who plays the dholki (a North Indian folk drum) and the tumbi (a single-string gourd banjo) formed Galitcha in 1996 with harmonium player and singer Chris MacLean, reedman Linsey Wellman, and percussionist Shawn Mativetsky. They started out performing ghazals (love lyrics) and qawwali songs from Nusrat. "It just progressed from there. Coming together with other musicians, I began to have a bit of influence from jazz."

The encounter with Lambert now seems inevitable though it didn't occur until the North American Folk Alliance conference in Montreal, in February 2005, after someone mistook Sodhi for the former smiling-booty boy, and then introduced them to each other.

"I started to show Punjabi folk songs to Yves. If I hum a song from the Punjab to any of the Quebecois musicians it resembles the beat and rhythm of the call-and-response songs of Quebec, or traditional French music, and has a touch of Celtic.

"I've been going over to Yves's place in Joliette and we've been jamming. We performed too at some conferences, and the directors who came to see us afterwards said, 'We like that you played a mixture rather than just the traditional Quebecois music, because we're getting a bit bored of it'. So that has been another motivator for us."

Sodhi and Galitcha are planning further cultural forays. One of the tracks on *Blé d'Inde* is written and sung in English by Chris MacLean and entitled *Road to Bamako* - the capital of Mali. It's the story of 11-year-old Ousmane, an orphaned street kid with a beautiful voice whom she encountered on Galitcha's trip to West Africa in January 2005 to perform at the Festival au Désert, near Timbuktu.

"We want to get back there to work with some of the street kids, to organize maybe a benefit concert. We already sent out the first shipment of drugs - kids' medicine that we've been collecting at our concerts."

Meanwhile Sodhi has another big crossover project in mind for Galitcha. "We've performed a few times in sacred places, and people have asked us to play some sacred music. So the idea is to put together such music from several cultures - Punjabi, Muslim and Hindu. Kind of like gospel for North America but with South Asian traditions."



Galitcha



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A Pole Apart

Descended from Polish immigrants, compelling American fiddler, Bruce Molsky, favours a broad range of traditional music, both as a solo performer or with European-based bands like Mosaic. Patrick Langston rosins up his pencil.

Take your pick: reality television shows, impending environmental calamity, the pell-mell pace of our lives. Something drives us time and again into the powerful and comforting and wide embrace of old-time music.

Look at Bruce Molsky. Heck, just when he was hitting his stride as a mechanical engineer, working 80 hours a week and pulling down a good dollar, he ups and quits to become a full-time musician on the big-money folk circuit.

Ten years down the road he doesn't think twice about that decision. "I'm not a trust fund kid, but if you want to create freedom for yourself you can do it."

Nor does Molsky worry overly about the bigger question of why the music – Appalachian, bluegrass, blues, Celtic, you name it – that he's tied himself to is so compelling.

He does know that "there's a whole subculture of people in their early twenties, late teens, who are seeking something that gives them a social connection, a sense of self. Music does that, you know. It's community."

Let's just say he loves the music and that it is a good thing for us he does. Because now we've got six Molsky solo albums, including last year's wonderful *Soon Be Time*, to savor. Those records feature a varied treasure trove of vocal and instrumental numbers, with Molsky's pleasing baritone and his impeccable fiddle, banjo and guitar front and centre.

Lately, there's been that fascinating array of Bruce Molsky side projects as well, but we'll get to those presently.

His love affair with non-hit parade music is a seasoned one. The liner notes to *Soon Be Time* point this out. *Take Fare Thee Well Blues*: it comes from a beat up LP of old Delta blues artists that Molsky unearthed in a record store when he was a teenager. At 51, he still owns the album and still plays the tune.

Another track, *The Golden Willow Tree*, lodged itself in Molsky's musical memory while he was washing dishes at Johnny's Big Red Grill in Ithaca, NY. A Cornell University student at the time, Molsky listened to the bar's folk music sessions as he worked in the

kitchen, and was especially taken with this tale of a sunken ship and betrayal that most of us better know as *The Golden Vanity*.

Performing these tunes requires care, he agrees. You have to respect the song, avoid the retro trap and give the performance your own stamp all at once.

"The more folk, old-time music I hear, the more I feel like I have some kind of sense of what the essence of it is. I kind of look for that essence of something."

Of course, that "essence" remains indefinable. But the artist and the listener know when it's been reached, and he more than most reaches it regularly.

Bruce Molsky's worked hard to mine that core of authenticity. In 1976, he made his first of several forays into North Carolina to meet old-time fiddling great Tommy Jarrell, who died in 1985. Jarrell taught Molsky songs like *John Brown's Dream* and *Cider*, both on the current album.

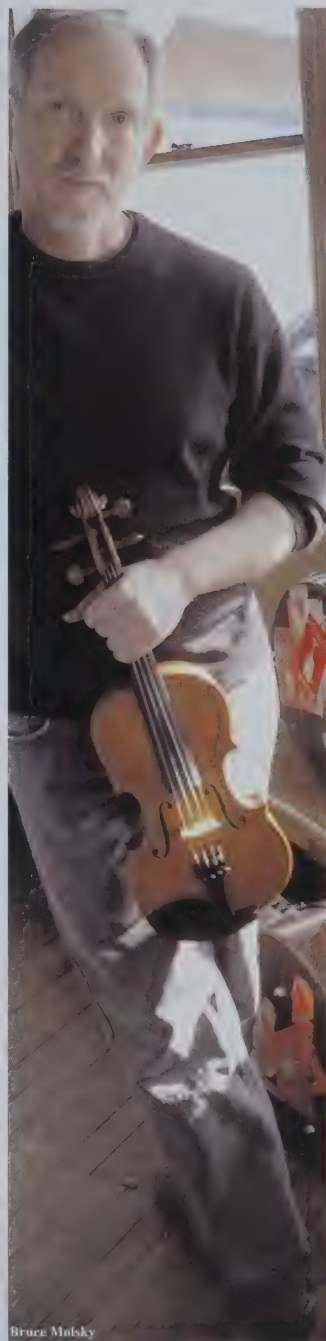
Those trips, says Molsky, were critical to "what I became musically. I was well aware of southeastern American music but I had never been around it that much. I discovered this culture I knew nothing about, and it presented an alternative. It was another way to be.

"Tommy put the music itself in such high esteem and all the people he learned from, he really held them in high esteem. When he talked about where he got a tune from, you could see in his eyes it meant so much to him. And that really moved me. The thing that gives any kind of folk music its value is not how complicated it is, or what key it's in, it's where it came from and what it represents. As an outsider, I said, 'Damn, why didn't I have something like that when I was growing up?'"

In fact, Molsky descended from Polish immigrants, not Appalachian holler-dwellers, maxed out his opportunities to hear such music while he was growing up.

Southern musicians like Bill Monroe and Mississippi John Hurt played New York City in the 1950s and '60s, and Molsky heard them at clubs like Folk City and at festivals.

Although he caught only the tail end of the 1950s folk revival, he continued to follow old-time music closely and when public interest in it again started growing in the late 1990s, he was ready and made the leap. He landed in a spot that's given him insight into and abiding respect for an American culture that preceded homogenization. Tommy Jarrell and his compatriots, says Molsky, were "the last of the gen-



Bruce Molsky

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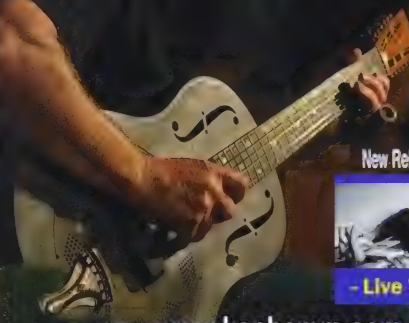
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Grisman: (The Waybacks are) destined to become revered new-acousticians,"

— New York Times



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erations of people who grew up before mass media" and their music regional where pop culture is virtually borderless, reflects "the way it felt to live in a rural place, a place where you didn't see a stranger more than once or twice a week."

Not that you should think of Molsky as a mouldy purist. He'd scoff at such a suggestion and probably point you directly to *Come Home*, from the recent album. The composer, you see, is Kjell-Erik Eriksson of the "rocking Swedish band Hoven Drogen," to quote the liner notes. All of which accords with those Molsky side projects mentioned earlier.

At present there are four including Mozaik whose other members hail from Ireland, the Balkans and Holland, and Jawbone with its feet planted in bluegrass, old-time, Celtic and African music. Molsky also contributed to the award-winning 2005 album *Abaraka/Tack!* from Swedish/Senegalese duo Ellika & Solo.

"I discovered folk music serves the same purpose wherever you go. It's just spoken with a little different accent," says Molsky of his several-years-old enthusiasm for world music. "That's one of the special things of music in general. It just goes to a place in the heart that nothing else can get to."

Country Comfort

Clay George works in a guitar shop in Victoria, BC, and dreams of Austin, TX. That state and its songwriters helped shape George's definition of country. Fish Griwkowsky compares him to Kris Kristofferson.

The smallest villages have their music scenes – vibrant and sometimes inexplicable. But for often economic reasons, certain cities become hubs of entertainment that their neighbours look on with that great sin, envy. In Western Canada, it's Winnipeg, Edmonton and Victoria that shine brightest, and it's the island city that Clay George calls home.

Now if you close your eyes and think of Victoria, you probably don't instinctively assume that country music would be burned into walls like the beeswax residue of ancient Orthodox churches. But in the genre of the rural and put-upon by God, B.C.'s capitol holds the most character in the nation. No, really. Wild and creative residents Carolyn Mark and Tolan McNeil are alone strong enough to shoulder this claim. Clay George supplements the reputation by further defying what



Nashville, and sadly much of the Canadian Prairies, define as being good country music. Meaning? Hint: if your eight label-hired session musicians have all had their teeth straightened and whitened, you're probably ... well, let's not mince words: shit.

But back to Clay. As Vancouver's busiest promoter Ken Beattie wrote in an email the other day, "reminds me of some of that great, early Glen Campbell." Kris Kristofferson also springs to mind, though Clay approaches his music more from the heart.

Our subject is working at Classic Guitars on the edge of downtown, unamused by his plight. "I've spent entire days without seeing a single soul in here and right before you call I get these three yahoos, playing every shitty song they know, yelling at the top of their lungs between their missing teeth."

Now, the theatrics of even that description are what I'm talking about when I mentioned Victoria's character. And soon enough George brings up the topic of vices, having just added coffee to his. "I have enough vices as it is," chuckles George. Specifically? "Well, alcoholic like everybody else. Smoking. Mostly the booze and cigarettes."

These are themes that lurk under the warm surface of George's new album, *Cherry Bank Hotel*. Despite a hopeful sound, his lyrics spin tales of exhausted love, disillusionment set in places he'd rather be and places he'd rather not. The production is simple and intimate, and there's not a second of flash that still somehow persists to the great disappointment of music snobs everywhere.

The thing I really noticed, though, was

George's escape mechanisms. Inside the songs churn an undercurrent of motion which, it turns out, makes a lot of sense in his itinerant existence. Since he was young, he's been aware of where the door is.

"I was born in Halifax. I was only there for about a year, grew up in southern Ontario: Branford, Burlington. I moved out here in '93. It was just to get away from where I was. I ended up staying, though not always Victoria. I lived in Nelson for half a year. I was in this place paying room and board with this really nice older couple and it was snow all the time. There was a pub at the bottom of the hill. My day was going to the pub and when it was over back up to the basement. Oh, and shovelling the driveway."

George continues. "I got to Victoria in '94. I had always sung in bands, more rock bands. Not so much with the country. When you're a kid, there's a tendency to scoff at the older generation's music."

"I've always liked a lot of country, the classics. I grew up listening to my dad's music, Tom T. Hall and Waylon Jennings. Jim Croce songwriter sort of stuff. I guess I've always been there in the back of my head."

"Then when I moved out here I couldn't really find anybody to play with. I guess I didn't really try. I had kind of given up by that point. By default, I started learning singer-style guitar playing to accompany myself. Things came together after that."

Clay George is his real name. Because it's about the best country handle imaginable, he gets asked about it a lot. As time went on, George became increasingly smitten with what

he came to understand was a Texas sound. It led him to a big decision. "A lot of the stuff that I was listening to - Townes Van Zandt, Willie Nelson, Lucinda Williams - they defined Texas songwriter. I wanted to get the hell out of Victoria, so it seemed natural, head to Texas.

"I'd been through Austin before and the weather is appealing. I really had no idea how long I'd stay, whether it'd be a month or a year. It's there I ran into Corb Lund.

"I ended up meeting his old roommate and moving into the place he used to live in. I think he wrote most of *Five-Dollar Bill* there."

The irony of this is that Lund, who's just now breaking into the centre spreads of American country music magazines, went to Texas to write about Alberta. George wrote about his life on the road, but concedes, "Being away from a place helps you to see it in

a different, clearer way."

Pretty soon, George was playing the clubs that got Lyle Lovett and Lucinda off the ground. You can tell he misses it.

"It's starting to get cold here," he mentions with Texas in mind. "I do get restless pretty quick. I have been thinking about heading somewhere else. I'm just not sure where. With the album coming out right now, it's kind of a bad time to pick up and go.

"Victoria, it's a really easy place to get by. As far as musicians go, I'm not sure why there seems to be heavy concentrations. Same reason there's a lot of homeless people here," he laughs. "People with nothing better to do kind of gravitate here. It's terribly expensive and gets more expensive every day. We call it the velvet rut - it's really comfortable," he shrugs.

"Really easy to find ten years have suddenly gone."



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The Queen of Troy



Natalie MacMaster

An instinctively inspirational fiddler, Natalie MacMaster has blazed a trail for all of Cape Breton's traditional musicians. And she has done it with dramatic flair. Her latest release, Yours Truly, sees her again chart new territory accompanied by some pretty flash company. Roddy Campbell bends her ear.

The voice of Steely Dan and the Doobie Brothers sings *Danny Boy* on the new Natalie MacMaster disc, *Yours Truly*. Michael MacDonald does a credible job too, somewhat along the lines of John Martyn covering *Somewhere Over The Rainbow* on his *Sapphire*.

It's a lavish track, though, *Danny Boy*—a million miles from the exhilarating, bare-bones traditional fiddle tunes she recorded on her last outing with her renowned uncle, Buddy MacMaster. But that's the whole point, isn't it. She takes chances, our Natalie.

Her escapades over the years have included recording in Nashville with bluegrass aristocracy—Alison Krauss, Jerry Douglas, Sam Bush and Bela Fleck—and shuffling around the fringes of world music with Galician piper Carlos Núñez, Irish accordionist Sharon Shannon, Canadian-Punjabi singer Kiran Ahluwalia and flamenco guitarist Jesse Cooke.

"I have an interest in artists that come under that [world music] umbrella—anything out of the ordinary," says MacMaster. "Combining different sounds really takes things out of the normal environment and it's always fresh and always intriguing to hear."

She also performed with Pavarotti, you know. Paul Simon, too. And The Chieftains think she's the bees' knees. Yeah, she does get about a bit.

She also sells the odd record—50,000-plus copies of four out of her last five recordings. Well, her rather good latest recording, true to form, offers something else again. Nothing radical, mind. A very cool cello opens the *Volcanic Jig*. Aboriginal actor Tom Jackson, adds native chants on the fabulously upbeat *Mother Nature*. An electric guitar shakes up *Matt & Nat's*. And for the very first time, she has recorded with her touring band rather than hired hands.

"I thought to myself, 'It always seems that the records I make I don't play on stage because of different players on different [recorded] instruments'. We always change things to make it



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work on stage, and sometimes it doesn't. I thought I'd like to make something that is representative of what we do live. 'I should use my band and do stuff that we can play after the record is finished.' Plus, the players in my band are really good."

Indeed they are. Matt MacIsaac—an outstanding pipe and whistle player—and Mac Morin—possibly the best piano player to accompany traditional fiddle in all of Cape Breton—are names likely familiar to readers of this magazine. Rounding out the ranks are Brad Davidge on guitar, Miche Pouliot on percussion and Shane Hendrickson on bass. Davidge does a fair amount of co-writing with MacMaster. Which leads into another pleasant surprise on *Yours Truly*: most of the material is original.

"My last record, which I recorded with my uncle Buddy, was very traditional. So this one I wanted to be very different. This record I started four years ago so a lot of the tunes were written around that time. I [also] tried to find tunes that didn't sound like fiddling tunes. I didn't want them to sound 'trad'. I just wanted to find music that was a little different. It just so happened that some of the tunes I was writing were weird and wacky and appealed to me."

Danny Boy, of course, proves a notable exception. MacMaster first met Michael MacDonald—the singer of such massive hits as *Takin' It To The Streets*, *Little Darling*, *What a Fool Believes* and *On My Own*—at a Boston Pops special filmed for American TV. The producer asked them to perform together.

"He was like, 'Why don't we do *Danny Boy*?' Apparently his father used to sing it. His father passed away a little while back. It was special to him. He even had his mother on the line waiting to hear the song. And the producer cut it from the show because it ran over time. It was all prepared.

"I remember calling [my husband] Donnell, saying, 'We never got to do this and it's ready to go. I'd love to ask him to be on my record. What should I do? And he said, 'Go for it. Ask him.' So I did and he said, 'Sure.' And two weeks later he sent me the track."

One of the most moving tracks on *Yours Truly* is MacMaster's *Farewell To Peter*—a beautiful tribute to the late Toronto-born, ABC News anchorman, Peter Jennings, who died in 2005, of lung cancer. Jennings had been a fan of MacMaster since picking up her cassette *Road To The Isles*, recorded in 1991. He had a particular fondness for its gorgeous air, *Glen of Thickets*, and asked her to perform it on his

"He let the students play music they wanted to play. He let us grow naturally. People can be overly strict. He was a kind, kind person. And he made you want to play the instrument."

— Natalie MacMaster on Stan Chapman

2002 New Year's Eve Special on ABC.

"I got home from a trip and was checking my voice mail. There was a message from Peter Jennings. I was shocked that he personally left me a message. It shows his character. He was really down to earth. We did play on his show and we kept in touch after that. He made a trip to Cape Breton a couple of times, him and his wife. I recommended a couple of places to go. He talked to my mother on the phone as well."

Jenning's wife, television producer Kayce Freed, invited MacMaster to perform at the memorial service.

"She gave me a call because she knew he was very fond of fiddle music. I was trying to decide what to play and I thought of a tune that was written two years earlier with my guitar player Brad Davidge. I had never given it a title. I remember spending a fair bit of time trying to come up with something that represented sweet sorrow or a happy sadness—that was the way the tune sounded to me. Anyway, she invited me and I thought of this piece. I thought, 'You know what, that is Peter's tune.' I just thought of it right there, *Farewell To Peter*."

Natalie MacMaster was born June 13, 1972, in the small rural community of Troy, NS. She took up the fiddle at nine. And while her uncle Buddy MacMaster is one of the most celebrated Cape Breton fiddlers, she chose to study

with Stan Chapman. Her classmates at the time included her cousin Ashley MacIsaac and Wendy MacIsaac. Chapman's patience, Natalie insists, nurtured their latent talents.

"He let the students play music they wanted to play. He let us grow naturally. People can be overly strict. He was a kind, kind person. And he made you want to play the instrument. He made you want to stay at it. And that's really important at a young age. You can lose interest. If somebody is too hard on you, or too strict, if somebody says, 'This way or no way,' then you can really lose interest pretty quick. All his students are still playing today and they are great players and broad thinkers."

At 16, MacMaster recorded her first cassette, the very traditional *Four On The Floor*, followed two years later by *Road To The Isles*. Combined, they sold an amazing 12,000 copies locally. In 1996, Rounder Records in the U.S. remastered and combined them into the ingeniously titled *A Compilation*. The same year she also released *No Boundaries*, an album she considers the first on which she took chances. It includes Bruce Guthro singing in Gaelic and English and delves into rock with the instrumental *Catharsis*. Her first major breakthrough, however, came in 1999 with the release of *My Roots Are Showing*. It earned a Grammy nomination.



Natalie MacMaster

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"That was another one of those shockers. It came out after *In My Hands* in the States. I think *In My Hands* laid the groundwork. I guess I had some name or whatever and when *My Roots Are Showing* came out. People paid more attention to it because it was traditional.

"It was pretty exciting, seeing the stars walking around. I never lose my head too much over stuff like that. It really makes you appreciate where you come from. Where I come from is so real. Awards shows, everybody gets gussied-up but it's just a moment."

Her pals The Chieftains also invited her twice to perform with them while they were honoured by the relief agency MusiCares in Los Angeles during the Grammys. Their guests included Pavarotti and Paul Simon.

Whatever, MacMaster still considers *In My Hands* one of her favourite recordings. It incorporated jazz and Latin rhythms and featured American bluegrass fiddler Mark O'Connor and Alison Krauss. With *Blueprint*, MacMaster delved further into bluegrass. Much of the inspiration for that record, she says, came from the producer, Darol Anger.

"I wanted to make a record that was acoustically brilliant – a musicians' record. Something that wasn't over-produced, something where you could just play and you could hear the brilliance of the players and their instruments. And so Darol chose the people we worked with and the studio in Nashville. I was delighted. He said, 'Let's go for the best.' And so that was how it happened."

The best included Nashville's A-list of acoustic musicians – Bela Fleck, Jerry Douglas, Edgar Meyer, Sam Bush, Alison Brown... elite company, for sure and obviously a reflection of her mighty talents. Yet ask MacMaster if she had a major turning point in her career and she adamantly says no. Success

came about in increments. Appearances on *The Tonight Show* with Jay Leno, *Late Night* with Conan O'Brien and *Good Morning America* certainly helped. Touring with country star Faith Hill didn't hurt either. "Nothing changes right away, not in my world," she says. "It slowly creeps up. A few years later you look up and you are playing 2,000-seat venues."

Whatever, *Natalie & Buddy MacMaster* followed *Blueprint*, and it couldn't have been made more differently. Recorded in Cape Breton in a matter of hours, it featured the gorgeous traditional tunes Buddy had popularized.

"It was the easiest record I ever made," says Natalie. "We sat down for seven hours, pressed record and just played. By the seventh hour I was just beat and he was, I promise you, just getting warmed up. He just sat there and played."

In July of this year Natalie MacMaster received the Order of Canada – the country's highest civilian honour – for preserving and promoting the fiddle music of Cape Breton. Although she doesn't consider herself a musical ambassador, she concedes she has provided a certain amount of inspiration for the next generation of young fiddlers.

"People ask me, 'When did you decide to do this for a living?' Well, I never did. No one before me did. Even the famous ones like my uncle [Buddy], he had a day job. He worked for 40 years on the railway. There never was a thought in my mind that I would do this for a living because there was no one before me that I could say, 'Oh, they did it.' In the era before my mine, there were a lot less career-focused women. You just didn't think of it. I don't know when the light bulb went on; it just kind of happened. But hopefully, I can contribute to the mind-set, that yeah, you can be a traditional musician."



Buddy & Natalie MacMaster

Juan de Marcos González revisits the Buena Vista Social Club



Ibrahim Ferrer, Compay Segundo and Ry Cooder

In the opening scene of Wim Wenders's film *The Buena Vista Social Club*, a '50s-era American convertible cruises down the streets of a crumbling Havana, looking for the past whereabouts of the Club. Sprawling in the backseat, sporting a classy fedora and sucking a Cuban cigar, is singer-guitarist Compay Segundo, elegant and charming, though approaching the age of 90.

The Buena Vista Social Club, shown throughout the world, gave visuals to the magnificent music pouring out from the disc of the same name. We learned the fairytale legends of musicians like the endearing crooner Ibrahim Ferrer, singing love duets with Omara Portuando, gardenia tucked behind her ear. Obsessed piano player Ruben Gonzalez, still in command of his technique in his 80th year, showed up first at the recording studio every morning, his home piano having been eaten by termites. A subtle presence, Ry Cooder respectfully inquires, listens and contributes to these

masters of a golden era. The film went on to be nominated for an Oscar, and won numerous awards, including, ironically, one from the Florida Film Critics Association.

The resulting disc, *Buena Vista Social Club*, sold four million copies worldwide, introducing a vast audience to the lively complexities of big band Cuban music, and starting a love affair with the rhythms, melodies and personalities of the island.

And then there's Juan de Marcos González. The guy on the ground who brought it all together. Natty Juan de Marcos González, with his grey dreadlocks and beret, had spent decades researching and performing this music in Cuba with his own acclaimed group, Sierra Maestra, and when opportunity knocked in the form of Ry Cooder and a date with London's World Circuit record label, González swung the door open wide, and has been swinging ever since.

Recently on tour across Canada with his band

of younger Social Club alumni, the Afro-Cuban All Stars, (U.S. performances still being illegal) leader Juan de Marcos González graciously served Lark Clark dinner in the green room of the Arden Theatre in St. Albert, and then proceeded to give an outspoken, no-holds-barred commentary on the state of Cuban music, Castro's economic policy, and where he gets those high-falootin' suits.

Was Buena Vista Social Club like lightning striking or was it the accumulation of years of work?

I think that it was an accumulation, because I have been working with the traditional Cuban music for a long time. In 1979 I created the first band with young guys to perform traditional music. This band was No. 1 in my country for about five years. The name of the band is Sierra Maestra and the band is still working. I stopped working with them in '97 because I was conducting five bands at that time and it was too much for me.

Sierra Maestra was the beginning of everything in my country and abroad. Sierra Maestra was the first band to perform in better spaces and the biggest festivals. I'm talking about WOMAD and the big jazz festivals in Europe. Through Sierra Maestra many people of my generation – I'm actually 52 years old – knew traditional Cuban music. Thanks to Sierra Maestra I met many of the people that I brought to the *Buena Vista Social Club* later and I started appreciating the traditional Cuban music and the stars of the old times much more.

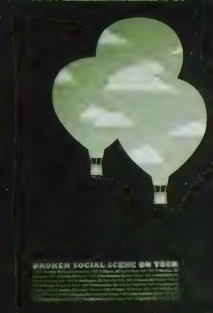
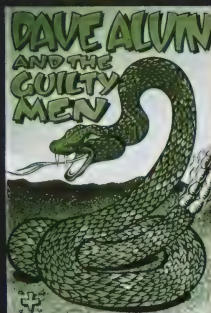
Besides, I'm coming from a family of musicians. My father used to be one of the top singers during the '40s and '50s with the best Cuban bands. Every 7th of September we used to have a party at my house dedicated to the Virgen de Regla, [the African-Cuban religion prevalent throughout Cuba] and many of these musicians that I brought to the *Buena Vista Social Club* were friends of my father, so I knew them from a long time ago.

I was working hard to preserve the spirit of

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Cuban music and to bring this spirit both to Cuban and foreign audiences. Buena Vista Social Club was a consequence of this work

In 1994 Sierra Maestra recorded an album for a small independent label in London called World Circuit. The album is called *Dundunbanza*. 250,000 copies were sold worldwide, which is a huge number for this kind of music. Thanks to the success of this album I started a very tight relationship with Nick Gold, the owner of the company.

In 1995 I was in London trying to survive. These were the times of what we call the "special period" in Cuba, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The situation was very bad and I had to go abroad to support my family, because there was no way to bring dollars to my house. I explained my idea to Nick Gold to make an album using these old guys.

At first we agreed to make just one album using the punchy sound of Cuban music of the '50s, with a big band. Later we decided to make two albums instead: the first with this punchy sound, and the second one using the more relaxed sound of the eastern part of the island. I'm talking about Santiago de Cuba and Guantanamo.

When I got back home in February of 1996, I sat down in front of my computer and started making the arrangements for both albums, and my wife started contracting the people that I had decided to bring to the recordings.

In March, we went to the studio and started recording with the people that we now call the *Afro-Cuban All Stars*. *A Todo Cuba Le Gusta* was the name of the album. It got a Grammy nomination. And the second album is what we call now the *Buena Vista Social Club*, basically done with the same line-up, except that we didn't need the big brass section on this smaller album with acoustic music.

Also we decided to bring Ry Cooder to Cuba to work with us on this second album. He had previously made an album for World Circuit called, *Talking Timbuktu* that you should know, with the great Malian guitar player Ali Farka Toure. Ry came, and we recorded the album *Buena Vista Social Club*.

Had you met Ry Cooder before?

Never, it was Nick Gold's idea.

What did you think of that idea?

It was a very good idea because it gave the al-

bum a certain flavour. He added his guitar and his kind of sound, the combination was very good. Ry is a great musician, you know, a great musician, and a very nice person.

Is Egrem [the Havana recording studio, seized by the Cuban government in 1959 and operated by it since then] a good studio?

The studio is one of the best in the world. For a big studio, the wood should be very old in order to catch the natural reverberation, that golden sound, a warm sound. For this, Egrem is a very good studio. But the technology is bullshit; it's very old. And now they want to go modern by making it a digital studio. This is a crime! For this studio you need analogue machines to catch that warm sound.

Is producing at Egrem a political job?

In a certain sense it is. If you are not aligned with the government, you cannot be the director of Egrem Studios. Every important job in Cuba is related to politics. You cannot be a representative of the State, (and everything belongs to the State) if you are not aligned. It's one of the problems we have in Cuba.

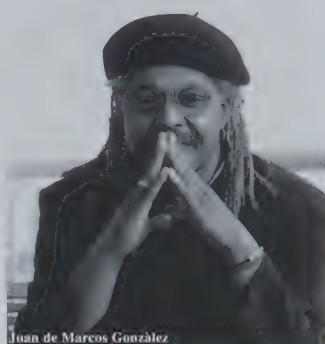
Is it hard for an independent artist to record in Cuba?

No, not now, because technology is going so fast, you can make a Grammy album in your house. But for proper Cuban music you have to record all the instruments, all the musicians, not virtual instruments.

The problem in Cuba is that there are no producers. There's a lot of talent, a lot of great arrangers, great musicians, but we don't have producers in Cuba.

I have bought some terrible music in Cuba! I can't play it on the radio.

Of course not, it's a very bad sound. Egrem makes a lot of bullshit and sells that bullshit to the world. For example, there was an album by Ruben Gonzalez recorded at Egrem 25 years before *Buena Vista* and never released. Very bad sound. But after the success of *Buena Vista* they start selling [these] bullshit recordings. There are a lot of businessmen buying these recordings, making good packaging and then selling them to Canadians saying, "Original recordings from the Golden Era of Cuban mu-



Juan de Marcos González

sic!" Egrem never did anything for those guys. This lady [gesturing towards his wife], she did it! She brought them to the studio and we made *Buena Vista Social Club*.

You started doing serious research into the older music of Cuba while you were in university. Why was that so important to you?

Because I wanted to find a space for my country in the world. For more than 60 years our music was the No 1 seller of tropical music. Our music spread all over the world, and even many top Hollywood films of the period used Cuban music.

After 1960, because of political reasons, we lost all this. Always I've thought we could find a way to recover the place that we had. I've been all my life trying to do it. I've done certain things, but still I have much more to do.

For example, because of the success of the *Buena Vista Social Club*, many people think that the only music we have is the music of the old times and the musicians are these old guys. But they are all gone! It's painful for me because I really loved many of them. Right now my fight is trying to introduce the generation of young Cuban musicians to the world. Because people know me as a kind of intellectual who really wants to support the culture of my country, my voice is listened to – but not in terms of business. It's a risk in the same way it was to bring these old guys to the stage, but I did it!

For three years I was trying to find a label that wanted to work seriously with the young generation of musicians. I have received more than ten propositions offering me a lot of money to make more *Buena Vistas*. It's not a business for me. I will not make it.



Celtic Colours



Celtic Colours

October 6-14

By Roddy Campbell

On the lower lake road from Baddeck to St. Ann's a signpost points to Tir Nan Og. The ancient Gaels considered the mythical Tir Nan Og their Garden of Eden. Clearly, the Gaelic-speaking Highland Scots who emigrated to this area of Cape Breton Island in the 18th and 19th century found a familiar comfort in the beauty here.

Autumn has transformed the wooded slopes surrounding the Bras d'Or Lakes into a glorious tapestry of rich reds, golds and yellows. Amidst this inspirational setting, Celtic Colours takes place in various villages and towns throughout the island.

2006 marks the 10th anniversary of this very special festival – one of the most delightfully unique and fulfilling in the country – dedicated to promoting the rich traditional culture of the region. And to kick off the celebrations, local fiddle phenomenon Natalie MacMaster headlines a sold-out opening gala event Friday night in Port Hawksbury. Surrounded by family and such friends as charismatic Galician piper Carlos Núñez and American banjo maestro Bela Fleck, MacMaster's clearly in her element bantering with the home crowd and dancing and playing as only she can.

PBS-TV is here, though, with almost a dozen cameras to record the event. As a result, the dialogue must pass as perfect; if not, it's repeated. The strain begins to tell on MacMaster and she flubs the odd line. All her early momentum slowly evaporates and the night starts to drag despite wonderful contributions from Núñez, Fleck and Natalie's iconic uncle, Buddy MacMaster.

Outside a full moon rises high above the Straight of Canso. Highway 105 leads north to the festival headquarters at the Gaelic college in St. Ann's. As midnight approaches, I half expect young fiddlers negotiating Faustian bargains at every crossroads. How else do you explain the phenomenal traditional talent nurtured here?

Most of the singers and musicians congregate in the after-hours Festival Club in The Great Hall of the Clans at the College. It's open to the public too, which provides added motivation for the performers as the formal and informal sessions wind their way towards morning.

In the coming nights, England's Flook will turn this place on its ear with their spectacular combination of raw aggression and exemplary instrumental skills. The Anna Massie Band – a trio of outrageously talented young Scottish women – will play their socks off, too. A major combination of talent, and the discovery of the year, methinks. Besides, I went to school with the accordionist's mum as it turns out.

Of course, the Festival Club is like a second home for the various members of Cape Breton's Beòlach. They formed at these very sessions back in 1998 and remain in incorrigible form as the week progresses. But it's the fiddlers who dominate the late night high-jinks. As well they might, considering the prominent role they play throughout the festival. Look at the talent on tap: Aly Bain, Liz Carroll, Jerry Holland, Howie MacDonald, Wendy MacIsaac, Brenda Stubbert... oh alright, you get the picture – fabulous fiddlers.

Saturday, Oct. 7, turns into one of those magical, memorable days. For starters, underdogs Scotland beat World Cup finalists France 1-0 at soccer. But we'll deal with that later. I'm off to a Gaelic workshop for children at the Highland Village near Iona. Half the fun of this festival is

getting to the venues. The sun shines. The scenery is spectacular. At the Village I'm directed towards a cottage where I meet Beth MacNeil – a warm, humorous woman with a huge personality. She has given the children Gaelic names and teaches them introductory words as she shows them how to make butter and bannock around a wood-burning stove. A cup of tea, and a natter and I'm on my way to Féis Mabou.

Picturesque Mabou sits on the west side of the island. The Féis (Festival) there offers lessons in Gaelic language and song as well as workshops for fiddle, piano, guitar, piping and dancing. There's a film crew here, too, but from Stornaway, Scotland, filming the young local singers. The wonderful singer Catherine-Ann MacPhee, originally from the Island of Barra but now lives near Ottawa, generously allows me to sit in her class while she patiently teaches the rudiments of Gaelic song. I come back the following day to watch Mary Jane Lamond do much the same thing. And it strikes me what a



Anna Massie

Celtic Colours

wonderful and thoughtful source of historical, local songs she has become.

Crab cakes and a jar in a nearby pub, The Red Shoe – “Proprietors: The Rankin Sisters,” the sign proudly boasts – and I’m as happy as a lark and particularly tickled by a poster on the wall. It’s a list of local fiddlers set to play the pub – among them, “Premier Rodney MacDonald.” A province with a political leader that plays the fiddle and gigs! You can’t make stuff like this up.

An assortment of mouth-watering evening concerts in various villages now needs serious contemplation. It’s the same thing every night, though. But I settle for Poetry Island School at Boularderie to hear the Karine Polwart Band, Anna Massie Band, Wendy MacIsaac & Stephanie Wills and Wally MacAulay.

MacAulay acts as the compare and comes up with the best line of the night: “I was an honour student... ‘Yes, your Honour. No, your Honour’.” Wendy and Stephanie, of course, have known each other for donkey’s and it shows as they effortlessly interchange between fiddle and piano on various dance sets and slow airs. The Anna Massie Band, however, catch me completely by surprise. This trio’s cumulative instrumental skills on guitar, mandolin, banjo, pipes and accordion are nothing short of phenomenal. And they are all still in their very early twenties. They truly deserved their standing ovation.

Boularderie is the setting for the gorgeous traditional song *When First I Came To Caledonia*. Karine’s husband and drummer, Mattie Foulds, is from here so what else is she going to open with? And it’s wonderful. Polwart’s set consists largely of her own impressive songs from her award-winning album *Faultlines* and its successor, *Scribbled In Chalk*. She’s in fine form, too, as is her band. Younger brother – guitarist Steven Polwart – tells anyone who will listen about the astonishing performance of Scotland’s national football team in Glasgow earlier that day. As always, all the performers play together for the finale and tonight it’s the grand old bothy ballad, *Mormond Braes*.

Back at the Festival Club with young Polwart and bass player Kevin McGuire, we raise a glass to Scotland’s goal scorer Gary Caldwell... and a dozen more besides... And we laugh like drains and talk bollocks until the last shuttle returns to Baddeck.

Morning rolls around in a flash, it seems. But I’m soon on my way back to the Féis at Mabou

on picture-postcard country roads dotted with apple trees. I stop at one of the many roadside restaurants that offer large bowls of clam chowder – full of lumps of lobster, salmon, scallops and clams – or big plates of fresh mussels for under seven dollars. A visit with Mary Jane Lamond to watch her teach milling frolics (waulking songs) before I drive the last few miles west to the edge of the ocean and revel in the beauty of the day.

If it’s Thanksgiving, Sunday night, then this must be Whycocomagh Education Centre. And Aly Bain & Phil Cunningham top a bill that includes the ubiquitous Beòlach, J.P. Cormier and A Crowd of Bold Sharemen. The Sharemen, a quintet from Newfoundland, turn out to be proficient singers and musicians but somewhat predictable with their arrangements. J.P. Cormier, though, has more tricks up his sleeve than a sorcerer’s apprentice. A masterful fiddler, guitarist, mandolin player and songwriter, he brings the audience to its feet for a standing ovation. Beòlach do likewise. They just get better and better every time I hear them. Surely, they are the best traditional band in the country. The lofty reputation of fiddle and accordion duo Aly Bain & Phil Cunningham certainly precedes them. And yet there is nothing to prepare you for the casual elegance of their remarkable playing. Disarmingly brilliant, they, too, bring the full house to its feet.

A visit to the store at the Gaelic College the next day costs me dearly. I’ve been meaning to replace my Run Rig vinyl for years. From St. Ann’s it’s a short, scenic drive to North River and its community hall to hear Ishbel MacAskill, Rocky Shore, Brian O’hEadhra & Nuala Kennedy, Angus MacLeod and Morris

MacLeod. The concert passes in a flash. But MacAskill’s lush Scottish, Gaelic singing and warm humour, along with Kennedy’s dynamic Irish flute playing, certainly prove memorable.

All that remains now is one more unforgettable trip back to Mabou the following night for Mary Jane Lamond’s Orian: An Snaithian Ceangall (Songs: The Connecting Thread) featuring Mairi MacInnes & Catriona McKay, Cathy-Ann MacPhee and Goirdh Dòmhnallach (Jeff MacDonald). As the Speyside Place auditorium darkens, beautiful slides of Scotland and Cape Breton are shown on two giant screens. Lamond introduces her guests one by one as they sing their way on stage.

“There are a lot of sad Gaelic songs, but a lot of joy in singing them,” says MacInnes. And it’s particularly so on this night. There’s a gentle, natural warmth to the performances of both MacPhee and MacInnes – the latter backed by the exquisite harp playing of McKay. And Lamond, of course, has her own unique, tender delivery. But it’s Jeff MacDonald that leaves the hairs standing on the back of my neck. His voice is rich and earthy – not unlike Dick Gaughan’s. What an amazing discovery. Listening to him I get the sense of how Alan Lomax must have felt when he first heard Leadbelly or Muddy Waters.

The next day I reluctantly prepare to leave for the Ontario Council of Folk Festivals Conference in Ottawa. Scotland loses 2-0 to the Ukraine. And it starts to rain once I cross on to the mainland. As I sit and wait amidst the brutal bustle of Toronto airport for a connection, I look out at the falling snow and I think of Tir Nan Og.



Bela Fleck and Carlos Núñez

Reviews



Bellowhead

Burlesque
Westpark

This might well be the most-awaited British folk album of the year. The duo of John Spiers and Jon Boden realized their big band vision with the formation of the 11-piece Bellowhead, and last year's toe-in-the-water *E.P. Anonymous* served as a taster for this debut full-length, while their festival appearances created waves. But with an album, that's meant to be heard in the tranquility of the home, the music has to stand singly – can Bellowhead do that? The answer is a qualified yes. They're ambitious, virtually a folk orchestra, skilled and imaginative, but sometimes the ideas outstrip their ability. In itself, that's not a bad thing, and certainly better than playing it safe, which would have been incredibly good. Boden's the real star of the show here. He's never been in better voice, pushing along *London Town* and bringing real emotion to *Across The Line*, and acting as the glue that holds the machine together. And his revisit of the gorgeous *Courting Too Slow* is nothing less than sublime, the record's highlight, where everything comes together in perfect harmony, and the orchestra finds its finest moment. The songs fare better than the tunes, remarkably, perhaps because they have a greater weight, although *Jordan* can't quite decide whether it wants to be a shanty or a spiritual (please, go for the shanty). There's definitely a stage atmosphere to much of the record – *Rigs Of The Time* capers like Tom Waits in a circus ring, and *London Town* has an arrangement that comes dangerous close to a West End musical, for example – although when it veers into the abstract, as it does on *Flash Company*, the strands all fall apart into a bit of a mess. They can play a good dance tune, although you have to wonder whether they always really need the brass on them. They're fine bringing a West Indian influence to *Sloe Gin*, and a very apt indicator of modern multicultural Britain, but at times they seem like over-icing the cake. Kudos to producers Ben Mandelson and Rob Keyloch, who bring excellent sonic clarity to the proceedings. And kudos, too, to the members of Bellowhead who've gone for their art. So it's not perfect. The best moments are brilliant, and the good greatly outweighs the bad. They're a band that was never going to hit it all in one; they remain a work in progress, breaking new ground. And when you do that, the missteps are as interesting as the path.

– By Chris Nickson

Loreena McKennitt

An Ancient Muse
Quinlan Road Music

It's finally here – Loreena's first studio release in 10 years. The ending of her self-imposed respite from recording has driven her fans worldwide into a delightful delirium, judging by the postings on her website.

And rightly so. She once again delivers a superb piece of work. The musicality of her recordings has always been outstanding, constantly setting a mood you can totally lose yourself in.

Her seventh studio recording encompasses all of her influences into a hauntingly beautiful Loreena McKennitt world. *An Ancient Muse* features a feast of fantastic sounds coaxed by excellent musicians from exotic and romantic instruments like the harp, hurdy-gurdy and accordion, oud, lyra, kanoun and nyckelharpa.

Since she started her musical journey from an ancient Celtic starting point years ago, you can trace where she has been, hearing the influences of the Orient, Arabian nights, King Midas and the Byzantine Empire. And, of course, a stop in the medieval world of Sir Water Scott is hopelessly expected and delivered. His poem *The English Ladye and The Knight* is beautifully transformed into a gorgeous song of traditional star-crossed lovers.

The nine songs comprising *An Ancient Muse* are bursting with amazing and beautifully layered sounds, so put on the headphones, sit yourself down in a darkened, candlelit room and pour yourself a glass of mead. Go ahead, let yourself go, and dive headfirst into Loreena's world of damsels, knights, Phrygian skies and lonely camel trains crossing the deserts. You won't be disappointed. It's a wonderful journey.

– By les siemieniuik

Bob Dylan

Modern Times
Sony/BMG/Columbia

Not sure if you've heard of this guy. He's been around for years, released some great albums, confused and confounded fans and critics alike and is still in the ring, swinging punches.

At 65 years old, he has swagger and energy that a lot of youngsters would die for. His voice has always fallen into the love-it-or-hate-it category. Now it is raspy and worn but has a sparkle and a sense of devilment to be relished. The songs are bluesy with a good dash of rock 'n' roll energy and a dollop of rockabilly twang.

Reviews

The backing band, which played a load of dates on the road with our Bob, has a relaxed and commanding hold on the material. Our hero wears his influences as well as his heart on his sleeve. *Rollin' and Tumblin'* is based on Muddy Waters's 1950 hit of the same name and does just what the title suggests. *The Vevee's Gonna Break* takes its inspiration from Memphis Minnie's *When the Levee Breaks*. The spirit of Chuck Berry inhabits more than a few of these cuts.

Lyrical, Bob has no match. His phrasing and timing are second to none. His words are obviously poetic; impressive in their effortlessness; deceptive in their simplicity and funny in their unexpectedness. "I heard a deafening noise / I felt transient joys / I know they are not what they seem / In this ugly domain / Full of disappointment and pain / You'll never see me frown / I owe my heart to you / And it's saying it's true / I'll be with you when the deal goes down," he sings on *When The Deal Goes Down*, and by the time he gets to that part, you know exactly what he means.

There's been some controversy as to whether Bob has ripped off the material or merely used it as a launching pad for the album. Is this the folk process in motion or a piece of grand thievery? He borrows lock, stock and barrel from other writers and uses entire choruses and melodies from other songs, yet the sleeve notes boldly state "All songs written by Bob Dylan". He has also been accused of copying the poetry of Henry Timrod. I think we will leave it to others to debate the nature of "borrowing" within the folk tradition and in literature. It's not like he invented it.

For the privileged few among you who are already familiar with Mr. Zimmerman. I am sure this will go to the top of your pile. For those of you who have not succumbed to his charms yet, I'd suggest you get a load of this one. Turn up the hi-fi and pass me a cold one. I want to hear him sing, "I paid my time and now I'm as good as new" one more time. Or even better, "They say prayer has the power to heal / So pray for me mother / In the hu-

man heart an evil spirit can dwell / I am a-trying to love my neighbour / And do good unto others / But, oh Mother, things ain't goin' well."

— By Tim Readman

Chris Frye and the Analog Ghosts Raised on Rhythm and Rhyme

Loafers's Glory Records

The opening track for *Raised On Rhythm And Rhyme*, *Let Go*, is a real standout — a gently grooving paean to, uh, letting go, backed by fluid blues guitar and the unmistakable voice of Mae Moore. By day, Chris Frye sings and plays guitar for Canadian folk wunderkinder The Bills. On this, his first solo effort, he comes across as a mellower version of Peter Mulvey, with the same unstudied musical eclecticism as his American counterpart. So what we get is straight-ahead acoustic pop on *The Verdant Truth*, a relaxed New Orleans groove on *Hope It Lasts For Years*, and a sing-along country lullaby on *Waiting On The Sun*. Joby Baker's warm and intimate production keeps it all together, and a

stellar cast of guests add their own touches. Sincere, catchy and diverse — this one's a keeper.

— By Richard Thornley

Great Aunt Ida

How They Fly

Northern Electric

Ida sounds more like a shy 10-year-old girl whispering secrets into the microphone than my great aunt — but this vocal innocence creates an interesting contrast with her mature sound and literary lyrics.

With a Radiohead-esque melodic sense and a Rachel-esque darkness, B.C. pianist Ida Nilsen creates lovely little indie-pop poems to sooth crooked hearts. Coded musings on love and snippets of strange friendships are wrapped in angular chords and built up by her fabulous rhythm section, bassist Scott Malin and drummer Barry Mirochnick, who has also played with Neko Case and Christine Fellows. She oversees some atmospheric horn and string arrangements and welcomes friends Jesse Zubot, Ford Pier and Veda Hille. Great Aunt Ida's Canada Council grant has certainly been put

to good use here.

— By Mary Beth Carty

Manitoba Hal Come the Ruination

Hal's Kitchen

This is a somewhat frustrating disc in that the chameleonic Hal Brolund is all over the stylistic map with this 10-song release. Nothing wrong with that, of course.

And there's little question he's a talented performer as songs like the powerful *Call Me Blue* underline his skills and probable depth as an acoustic bluesman. His live (and oddly titled) instrumental *Keep On Singing* demonstrate his stand-out skills as an accomplished guitarist — this is a beautiful track that incorporates many diverse influences, making it doubly intriguing. There are the requisite songs about railroads and fishing, of course, as Hal goes off on folk tangents. The song *Summer* seems to reprise the original *Keep On Singing* ending in a collision of background vocals in an attempt to apply a gospel sense, with mixed results. The energetic, if not effervescent *Line and Pole* marries Hot



Chris Frye and the Analog Ghosts

Beautiful An excellent solo debut
Times Colonist, Victoria

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Reviews

Tuna to Taj Mahal—a high-light. But the cream of the crop (and the reason for the frustration) is *Walls of Jericho*—a magnificent piece that gives Hal the distinctive voice he's searching for, rather than the raspy, somewhat forced-sounding blues growls he tends to favour. Here is a great song that stands out on every level, focusing all these talents into one place. Potential galore.

—By Eric Thom

Doc MacLean

Narrow House

Independent

This release has been a long time coming for one of the hardest-working men in Canadian blues.

Doc clearly has a Waits fixation, right down to including his percussionist, Stephen Hodges. Yet MacLean has his own style. Trading notes with the likes of Larry Taylor, producer Colin Linden, Fats Kaplin and Fairfield Four's Rev. Joe Rice, MacLean forges a moody, minimalist, Delta fog of

traditional blues spliced with a modern twist. You'll find gut-bucket rhythms, simple yet seamless instrumentation, sparse, somewhat repetitive arrangements and a dark and intentionally murky mood on this aptly titled release. MacLean's singing voice—an acquired taste at best—is appropriate for the material and lends itself to the moody mélange of National Steel, mandolin, fiddle and percussion. Yet his vocals have a droning quality that tend to warble, if not chant, as they occasionally grate. MacLean is obviously a road-seasoned student of the acoustic masters (Sonny & Brownie, Son House) and his thick-thatched arrangements and homegrown lyrics are proof of his authenticity. Yet the difference between this being a great album versus a good album revolves around his vocal ability. Some will like it. Some will not. Highlights include *Angola Prison Rodeo* and the title track.

—By Eric Thom



Eve Goldberg

Eve Goldberg

A Kinder Season

Borealis

A melancholy permeates this entire album, recorded in the months after Eve's mother's death. Bittersweet songs like *Funny How Love Can Die* and *When the Leaves Began to Fall* are accompanied by fragile melodies and her clear alto voice. For an artist who is equally at home playing blues or bluegrass, this recording is full of simple, pure folk songs, of a type that is becoming increasingly rare in this fusion world. Sure, the blues slip in here and there (*Nova Scotia Blues*, *Blue and Low Down*), but it's those lovely folk songs that stand out. *Let Me Rise* brings to mind Kate Wolf, and *Pebble in the Water* is filled with beautiful, gospel-like vocal harmonies. While Eve's previous albums have all had moments of brilliance, they've been uneven, or marred by inferior production. This album is neither: her best yet.

—By Shawna Biamonte

Cara Luft

The Light Fantastic

Independent

This is Cara's first venture into recording since she left the Waitin' Jennies. I always wish the best to someone who leaves a going musical concern to pursue their own muse. Yet you can't help but also worry a bit that the admirers collected while part of said going musical concern will be disappointed in the new path. No such worries here. Cara recruited 54-40's Neil Osborne as the



Cara Luft

producer and together they have done her work proud.

The Light Fantastic is a collection of 13 strong songs showcasing Cara's two strongest suits—her guitar playing and her wonderful voice. It's much more contemporary and less traditionally influenced than her last solo effort, *Tempting the Storm*. That being said, one of the album's stellar songs, *Lord Roslyn's Daughter*, is very much traditional in sound and style, telling a story containing enigmatic riddles and a nefarious nobleman on a "milk white steed" out to steal the damsel's virtue.

A wonderfully produced and great-sounding album, *The Light Fantastic* is a great next step in the resumed solo career of Cara Luft.

—By Iles Siemieniuk

Chas Guay & Christina Forgeron

Chas Guay & Christina Forgeron

Independent

Here's a smart, sophisticated and thoroughly con-

temporary outing from two long-established P.E.I. performers. Chas Guay, in addition to operating the island's coolest indie record shop, has performed and recorded with Lennie Gallant, Nathan Wiley and Mick Taylor, among others. Forgeron is a little newer to the music biz, but her credentials include work with The Sonic Roots, Catherine MacLellan, and musical theatre. Impeccably produced, their first recording as a duo takes us down some back alleys of the human condition. *Lonely Kind* is a rather bitter little number about society's forgotten, a theme that is perfectly suited to Guay's well-worn voice. Forgeron takes the lead on the countryesque *What I Knew of Love*, a nostalgic reminiscence about a past lover. And they join forces on *Angel's Guide* where we learn that "we live for song straight from the heart", which is a pretty fair summary of this whole album. "Folk" in the same sense that latter-day Richard Thompson (think *Mock*

Reviews

Tudor is "folk", this is music for your late nights and restless days.

— By Richard Thomley

Guy Clark

Workbench Songs
Dualtone

Who among us has the balls, really, to critique the songwriting of Guy Clark. Clark's melodies are subtle and sweet. His topics are regional but with a universal appeal. Any given song can be political, sentimental, cutting or goofy, but each has a voice that gives it integrity. They are the goals to which many young (and many experienced) songwriters aspire. All of this is with good reason. Few artists have such a track record of quality that extends throughout their entire career. Am I gushing too much?

— By Chris Martin

Clay George

Cherry Bank Hotel
Copperspine Records

Take a little Gram Parsons, add a bit of Townes Van Zandt and mix in a lot of heartache and loneliness with a soft baritone voice and you have Victoria-based Clay

George. With his debut album *Cherry Bank Hotel*, George has created one hell of a warm and enjoyable listen. With a hint of Neil Diamond in his voice. George is all roots and country. Lush production, strong harmonies, inviting instrumentation and a little help from friends like Tolan McNeil, Carolyn Mark, Daniel Lapp and Doc Jenkins, *Cherry Bank Hotel* is sure to turn a few heads. George has put together a wonderful collection of stories about the human condition, reminiscent of early Son Volt. With high points like *Cherry Bank Hotel*, *Victoria* and *Blue Spruce Circle*, George's *Cherry Bank Hotel* is definitely worth checking into!

— By Philip Harries

Jane Eamon

Deep Water
Janey Girl Music

Jane Eamon from Kelowna, BC, is fairly new to the music scene with her first release back in 2002. *Deep Water*, her third and latest release, is a blend of traditional music forms like spirituals, bluegrass, gospel and blues with old-time

melodies that work very well. Her sweet voice, well-crafted songs, poignant and timely messages and charming instrumentation make for a beautiful and heart-warming listen. Recommended listens include *Black Wind Blowing*, a protest song against the Bush government's handling of the New Orleans hurricane tragedy; *Move On Down*, a song about human struggle and hope, and *Long Way Down*, a spiritual with a uniquely jazzy twist.

— By Philip Harries

Luther Wright and The Wrongs

Instrumentality

Independent

I listened to this CD three times to try to figure out why country punk player Luther Wright decided to do an album so highly influenced by American traditional music, including new remakes of classic tunes like *Coloured Aristocracy* and George M. Cohan's *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. Wright takes this music to places it probably ought to go simply by providing his own perspective,

which is completely different from an old foggy folkie like me. In the end I decided that this collection was created simply for the fun of doing this. I like the mix of traditional and contemporary music on this CD because it's original, alive and proves that music isn't something that should live under glass and be examined by ethno-musicologists. This is fun listening. Wright has recruited some amazing studio players including two of the most respected players in old-time and bluegrass circles, Chris Coole and Dan Whitely. All in all, this is a neat project and I'm looking forward to seeing this on stage.

— By Mitch Podolak

Catie Curtis

Long Night Moon

Compass Records

Certainly an equal to folks like Nanci Griffith or Shawn Colvin in songwriting style and ability, Catie Curtis is one of those artists you rediscover as you pass by at a folk fest on your way to see someone else. When you stop to have a listen, you remember once again that she is worth stopping for. Her songs are con-

fident and concise with a sweet poetry that is defined by its simplicity. She touches equally on either side of the folk-pop hyphen.

A particular gem on the disc is *Passing Through*, co-written with Mark Ereli. It should be held up as a more positive and proactive response to the John Mayer anthem of lethargy, *Waiting On The World To Change*. Curtis sings of hope in a voice that you are willing to believe. Lome Entriss provides some lovely production work on the disc as a whole.

— By Chris Martin

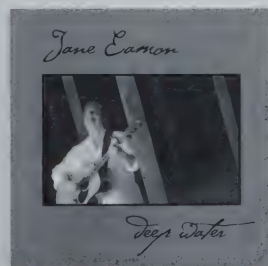
Crooked Still

Shaken By A Low Sound

True North/Signature Sounds

In the great acoustic revival of our times, songs and traditions that not so long ago seemed to be endangered species are coming back big time. And whatever stereotypes some older folks may cling to about young people today, it's sounding more and more like all kinds of traditional music is in maybe the best hands ever.

This would include the hands of Crooked Still.



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Reviews

who seem to have a solid understanding of the difference between respect and worship. Their versions of old songs bring them back to us as revelations, evoking the eeriness of that old weird America but informed by all that has happened since. They turn it into a new kind of beauty that's haunting like *The Trinity Sessions* and fresh like Friday night.

Aoife O'Donovan's singing conjures a little Sara Carter and some Peggy Lee, but she's got her own sense of melody, soft so you want to listen up and swinging enough to get you on the floor. The guys, they mostly shut up and play, as in play their asses off. The cello, bass and banjo are a groove collective and a choir of voices, from crunchy to smooth. It's a great record, one that keeps calling you back to listen again.

— By Ian Kilburn

Outlaw Social

A seven song E.P.

Independent

Some people think of Victoria, BC, as a quiet government town, nodding off around Mile 0 of the Trans-Canada. There are others who know it's where some pretty special and unique artists, including No Means No, Nellie Furtado and Kinnie Star, found their sound and where Daniel Lapp, who's invoked a fiddle revival of biblical proportions there, calls home.

Victoria's where Outlaw Social hail from, and there are probably great tales of how musicians known for their work with Scitj

MadDühk, the Paperboys, the Bill Hilly Band and other outstanding acoustic roots outfits all found one another, but we must be brief.

If your musical heart starts to throb at the sound of Appalachian, bluegrass or classic English-style folk, a la Jansch, Outlaw Social have woven elements of all of these together and added a little rain on the leaves and a summer sea breeze to them all.

Their arrangements and musicianship ride a fine line between raw and sweet in all good ways, and it may well be that like those Duhks, Bills and a handful of others, they're creating a new voice in Canadian acoustic music.

— By Ian Kilburn

Paul Burch

East to West

Bloodshot Records

Paul Burch is a veteran on the country music circuit. He has performed at the Grand Ole Opry and his supporters at one time or another have included Chet Atkins and Marianne Faithful. With his sixth release, second with Bloodshot Records, East to West showcases his solid storytelling and musical talents. Combining fluid melodies, catchy songwriting abilities with a unique voice, Burch has put his signature on "roots meets country" for a brilliant listen from start to finish. Songs of note include *Montreal*, *December Sparklers* and a tribute to the legendary BBC-Radio host who passed away in 2004 — *John Peel*.

— By Philip Harries



Roxanne Potvin

Roxanne Potvin

The Way It Feels

Alert Music

2003's *Careless Loving* — Potvin's first album — proved that hard work, determination and a unique presentation can bring success. A distinctive blending of old to new, this spry 24-year-old exudes a delicate balance of innocence and mischievousness.

From the start, *The Way It Feels* receives spirited assistance as Potvin duets with one of her heroes, John Hiatt, on the seductive opening track, *A Love That's Simple*. This shot of Memphis roots 'n' soul (complete with the Memphis Horns) is one of the album's highlights, followed by another captivating original, *Hurting Child*.

What follows does not align itself as closely with the traditional blues content of her debut but, instead, rallies around her wide-ranging influences and songwriting. Nine of these songs are originals. Further powerful support comes from Daniel Lanois, as they sing together on the Acadian waltz *La Mervette*. Bruce Cockburn guests (guitar) on the smooth and strongly jazz-flavoured *While I Wait For You*.

Her penchant for '50s R&B is realized in *Caught Up* while she dips into west-side Chicago blues with *Your Love Keeps Working On Me*. The breathtaking *Don't Pay Attention* sums up her star-power nicely, as she accompanies her lusciously appointed vocals with bare-bones piano to stunning effect.

Potvin is a fresh, youthful presence with a bag full of tricks. It will be fun to watch how things turn out for her.

— By Eric Thom

Johnny Dowd

Cruel Words

Bongo Beat

Johnny Dowd hails from New York, but his music is out there! Famous for experimenting and bending the alt-country genre, *Cruel Words* is no exception. Instrumentally, this album

is tight — the song break, the tension. The twists and eclectic instrument usage is much akin to a Frank Zappa or a Tom Waits record, and Dowd's use of the '60s-type keyboard and jazzy explorations are reminiscent of Captain Beefheart. His songs are

sermonic in nature, but hint at a dark humoured, self-preachy, introspective look at his life — like a car crash, it makes you want to turn away, but you end up taking another look. You can't help but rubber-neck *Cruel Words*.

— By Philip Harries

Reviews



Annie Gallup

Annie Gallup

Half of My Crime

Waterbug Records

Annie Gallup's seventh album is a challenging listen, due to the fact that she is a literary writer who uses song as a vessel for her fictions. While her vocals, melodies and guitar play-

ing are always pleasant, it's the characters and stories she creates that are the catch. Three competitive brothers, an immigrant from 1917, Mary's brother, Artie, a reminiscent alcoholic — these are just a few of the characters she intro-

duces on these 14 tracks, which feature only Annie and the bass player of her choice. No guest musicians needed! *Sugar*, a sexy but undesired lover, appears in a couple of songs. *Field of Flowers* is a sad war song. I noticed that a lot of critics wonder why she isn't more widely recognized. As a response, I offer that Annie's music is more intellectual than passionate — her delivery is always calm, grounded, pensive. *Free*, the last track, is the closest she ever comes to angry on *Half of My Crime*. Personally, I want to listen to this album while soaking in the bathtub on a Saturday evening surrounded by candles.

— By Mary Beth Carty

Ani DiFranco

Reprieve

Righteous Babe

Wow. A sober masterpiece from a true artist. With ample musical space provided by stand-up bass player Todd Sickafoose and sound artist Saint Claude, Ani's thoughts breathe through these modern musical landscapes, founded on her innovative, confident playing of a beautifully resonating guitar. *Subconscious, Nicotine*, and *In the Margins* are meditations on love and self. *Unrequited* is about youth versus life commitment. *Decree* is an angry political number, and *Millenium Theatre* a more sarcastic and wistful one. *Half-assed* is my favourite

track, for its passionate delivery, unusual chords, mixture of personal and political, and for its verse about strawberries at the supermarket — "they're all kinda tart and tasteless / wild things are not for sale anymore." The title track, a haunting poem that speaks of Manhattan, Hiroshima and feminism, stops you dead in your tracks. If art can change the world, Ani's new album just might.

— By Mary Beth Carty

David Gogo

Acoustic — Official Bootleg Vol.2

Cordova Bay

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Reviews

ern states. Music like this would spur the energetic gyrations of the patrons as they wore away the floor boards beneath their feet.

Here Gogo has the tools for such juke joint work with his 1930 National Steel and 1915 Gibson guitars. Choice cuts include the self-penned *She's Broke Through*, detailing the tragic 1915 mining disaster that took the life of 19 miners, including David Gogo's great-grandfather. Gogo writes most of the songs, but Robert Johnson's seminal classic *Dust My Broom* and Ken Hamm's *Intertidal Zone*. Ten tracks that offer the side of David Gogo that is not heard often enough.

— By John Roman

Sally Nyolo and the Original Bands of Yaoundé

Studio Cameroon
Riverboat/World Music Network

I love this CD, perhaps as much for what it represents as for what's recorded on it. The cover art says it all. A radiant Sally Nyolo — former Zap Mama singer and accomplished solo artist — stands in front of the red steel doors of what one assumes is a warehouse studio.

She holds her hands outstretched, palms up, in a gesture of welcome or gift giving. Which is precisely what she's doing with this project. A longtime resident of Paris, Nyolo returned to her native Cameroon in 1998, opened a studio in Yaoundé and began inviting local artists to record in her space. Nyolo's presence as performer is limited

to three tracks, and while she is credited elsewhere as a writer, the project really does belong to the 13 other ensembles featured. The individual tracks vary from polished to rough around the edges. Consistent throughout is the warmth of both the local bikoutsi rhythm and the special atmosphere in which each of these tracks were recorded.

— By Gallagher Parkinson

Chris Smither

Leave the Light On
Red House

You might get thrown for a small loop with the first track, *Open Up*. Chris Smither's gone cowboy? But it takes no time to slip into that warm, comfortable mould that is essential to every one of his 12 releases. Nothing too fancy. Nothing overly original. But that warm rasp of a voice and his deft finger-picked playing style fits like a favourite pair of wool socks on a cold day. The added textures from fellow pickmeister Tim O'Brien, and the sweet, backing vocals of Anita Suhanin (and on *Seems So Real*, Amy Helm and Fiona McBain of Ollabelle) add much to this production.

His songwriting skills remain front and centre — regardless of how perfect his choice of Smither-friendly covers — largely because they stand up so well beside the works of Dylan and Peter Case. Smither's title track, alone, is a thing of beauty — the atypical Chris Smither song, while the hilarious *Origin of the Species* keeps things light.



Diplomacy delivers his sarcastic take on American aggression. Nice to hear him cover Lightnin' Hopkins's *Blues In A Bottle* — the song that first triggered his love of the blues, providing him with a mentor when he was but 17. And the traditional folk standard *John Hardy* gets a thoughtful update, with the help of O'Brien's fiddle and members of Ollabelle. The too-short, moving *Reprise* is worth the CD's price alone.

— By Eric Thom

The Twisters

After the Storm
Northern Blues

After the Storm takes you for a lively ride through the world of jump swing blues. This Vancouver group last came out of the recording studio three years ago and were Juno-nominated. *After the Storm* takes The Twisters up another step and deserves widespread recognition. Each song is a gem, but specifically the selection *Harp Player* is a Dave Hoerl workout and

Thick and Thin has a natural get up and swing.

Newest member, upright bass player Ken Picot from Gabriola Island, stepped in to some big shoes and has earned his keep with an energetic hand-slappin' style.

After the Storm is an album that will get worn out well before you ever get tired of it.

— By John Roman

Kevin Macleod

Dorney Rock
Greenrux

The third album from Kevin Macleod, mandolinist from well-known Scots band The Occasionals, is a mixture of traditional and newly composed material and is a wonderful piece of work. There are three guest musicians on the recording who add real depth to this album. Alec Finn, a god of the bouzouki and one of my heroes, the Orcadian guitar supremeo Kris Drever of Lau fame, and Luke Plumb from Tasmania, who plays with Shooglenifty, and is a real

discovery for me.

The sound is light and intricate and not unlike a Gerald Trimble album in places in its tight arrangement. The backing utilizes a lovely mixture of counterpoint, for example *The Nominator*, or the ladies' jig, which sounds amazing through the headphones. Elsewhere there is great chordal backing, as in the nautical hornpipe which underpins the melody but never overpowers the tune, despite using two instruments, an acoustic guitar and a 1928 tricone resonator tenor guitar. Elsewhere, Alec Finns's instantly recognizable backing on *Robert MacDonald's Jigs* is superb. Buy it now!

— By Seafan Hannigan

Pete Morton

Flying An Unknown Flag
Harbour Town

I'd forgotten just what a truly great song *Another Town* is. It's 15 years old and while I'm not usually a

Reviews

fan of an artist recycling previously recorded work. I'll happily grant a dispensation in this case. I simply can't think of a better anthem for perseverance in the face of adversity – for hope.

It's a theme that runs deep in Pete Morton's work. All the more remarkable for the fact that Morton tackles head-on some of the bleak realities of our age, such as the plight of North African refugees in leaky boats (*The Shores of Italy*), global bullies (*Corruption Country*), or ordinary, marginal lives worthy of Alan Bennett or Mike Leigh (*The Post Office Queue*). The standout for me is *The Busker's Son*, where he simultaneously absolves a friend and former fellow traveller who long ago left the path for a sedentary existence, and celebrates his peripatetic life in music: "It was good to see you after all this time, your story is golden and so is mine."

Good to see you, too, Pete.

– By Gallagher Parkinson

Darrell Scott

The Invisible Man

Full Light Records

Born in Kentucky, Darrell Scott has moved around, paying dues in Toronto,

East Gary, IN, and Boston before settling in Nashville.

He's an in-demand session player, working with the likes of Guy Clark, Sam Bush, John Cowan and Tim O'Brien, the latter three of whom play on this, his sixth, disc. As a songwriter, he's won the Nashville Songwriter's Association award in 2001, and ASCAP's Songwriter of the Year in 2002, and the experience shows in the mature lyrics on this disc, in songs like *Let's Call It A Life*, *Looking Glass*, and *Do It Or Die Trying*. This is the kind of disc that top recording artists filch songs off for their own records, and hopefully make some dough for in-the-trenches veterans like Scott. Good, solid work.

– By Barry Hammond.

Keiron Means

Far As My Eyes Can See

Fellside Recordings

As reported in the last edition of this estimable publication, there's bit of an old-time mountain music revival underway in Canada. This recording goes to show that it has also spread to the shores of Old Blighty.

Keiron Means is the son of the traditional singer Sara Grey. He was born in the United States and grew up in Britain, being exposed to and falling in love with the music of both traditions. This collection features a couple of originals, a few trads, and covers of songs by the likes of Skip James and Jean Ritchie.

Keiron supplies fine guitar and singing, ably assisted by the aforementioned Sara Grey on vocals and banjo and Ben Paley on fiddle. There's an effortless feel to this disc and a great atmosphere that really helps get the songs across. The accompaniment is sparse but fits the songs like a glove. An excellent recording.

– By Tim Readman

Anne Lindsay

News from Up the Street

Independent

Fiddler Anne Lindsay is a thoughtful musician, staking out original territory for her violin voice.

The album, *News from Up the Street*, takes us on a jaunt not only up the street, but around the neighbourhood and, ultimately, outward bound.



As a composer, she creates tunes that are alternately appealing, cheerful, dance-inducing and introspective. *The Silvery Slocan* paints a vivid picture of a trip on B.C.'s Slocan River, the bends in the river, with its unexpected landscapes and shifting moods reflected in unpredictable harmonies and changing tempos.

Lindsay has the grace to give plenty of room to her excellent roster of playmates. Multi-instrumentalist David Woodhead alternately anchors the fiddle

with his bass and shimmers on the mandola. Jason Fowler's inventive guitar everywhere provides inspiration. The production is clear and open, with all voices being heard.

The best is saved for last. *Wichita Fog* is hypnotic, with compelling, almost train-like rhythms, and is Lindsay's most successful vocal of the disc.

Concluding the album is a composition by Oliver Schroer which sounds like a conversation with God. Performed as a duet with Lindsay, the fiddles swoop

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and sigh, an outpouring of the yearnings and workings of the heart. And while the Divine response is not heard, its presence is clearly felt. A consolidation of Lindsay's work thus far, and a delightful plunge forward.

—By Lark Clark

Ember Swift

The Dirty Pulse
Few'll Ignite Sound

A political party album of the highest quality, *The Dirty Pulse* starts off with an upbeat ska number and never lets up its joyous energy. Ember and her musicians draw inspiration from R&B, afrobeat, jazz, folk, rock, tango — each song is different but unified by her assured vocals and the band's tightness.

This is miles better than her previous album, *Disarmed*, and arrangements are perfect — harmonies are used sparingly but effectively. Lyndall's bass playing is expert, and guest musicians appear in all the right places. Ember Swift has taken guff in the past for bearing resemblance to Ani, but here she really stakes her own territory. A pop-y variety album you can dance to while contemplating the world's injustices. Perfect for the revolution.

—By Mary Beth Carty

Rick Fines

Solar Powered
Independent

Solar Powered is self-described as an, "off the grid" recording performed in a cabin in the woods. Away from the 60-cycle hum of bent knees and crossed fin-

gers, there is a palpable freeness of expression that literally oozes from this record. Rick Fines is one of those artists that doesn't dance or fool around with pretense; on this recording he's one guy with guitar chops to spare and a signature voice that cuts to the quick. While roots and blues may be an easy category to file this recording under, it takes but one listen to realize that you are hearing an apt description of the human condition: it has moments of humour and despair, hope and contentment. The closing track *In The Arms Of What Will Be* — the opening line of which is borrowed from Thoreau's *Walden* — really is one of those rare songs that remind you how good it feels to be comfortable in your own skin. This is a beautiful record.

—Del Vezeau

Kim Beggs

Wanderer's Paean
Caribou

The Yukon's Kim Beggs took her first bold steps in 2004 with the release of her wonderful debut, *Streetcar Heart*. For *Wanderer's Paean*, she has recruited several of the same strategic characters who added much of the spirit to that first effort. So producer and multi-instrumentalist Bob Hamilton's sympathetic approach, again, allows Beggs lots of breathing room to sing her heart out. So here and there a country fiddle makes a subtle appearance, as does a steel guitar. An acoustic upright bass warrants the odd mention. A tasteful mandolin,

too. But really, the songs — grand tales, largely set in the north — stand on their own, swaddled in that unique, warm and distinctive voice. The measure of this record is surely the country-folk of *Lips Stained Red* — a contender for song of the year by any reckoning. *Wanderer's Paean*, then, is not a major departure from *Streetcar Heart* but rather a tasteful confirmation of a distinct talent.

—By Roddy Campbell

Tanglefoot

Dance Like Flames
Borealis

With all due respect to their legions of fans, Tanglefoot have always been a bit of a dodgy proposition for me. I think it's probably all that '70s hair and those tie-dyed shirts. Regardless, *Dance Like Flames* is the group's first studio release since the departure of founding fiddler Joe Grant, and for better or worse it's pretty much a standard Tanglefoot record — musically somewhere between Meat Loaf and Stan Rogers. The songs are anthemic, with big, singable choruses, and a topical affinity for the joys and tragedies of everyday life. (*The Whiskey Trick*, *When Dad and Uncle Archie Lost the Farm*). They turn in some credible French on *Paddle Like Hell* and fine a cappella swag-gers on *Empire and the Right (George)*. And if it all sounds a little musty to me, I can't fault them for their passion and conviction. File with your Wolfstone and Smoky Finish.

—By Richard Thornley

Richard Knechtel

Carrot
Greentree Music

Richard Knechtel's *Carrot* is a lively collection of songs. His voice is pleasing and he displays competent control in a multitude of musical styles including roots, jazz, blues and country. Although *Carrot* showcases some commendable instrumentation and musicianship, it is marred lyrically with a few sappy songs.

—By Philip Harries

Riley Baugus

Long Steel Rail
Sugar Hill

I cannot remember when I last heard a recording of American traditional music that in every way possible rings so true to the heart of the people. Riley Baugus is a fiddler, banjo player, storyteller and singer who has entirely absorbed his tradition. This CD contains songs like John Henry June Apple and Sail Away Ladies that have been standards amongst folk revival-

ists for a half-century but only somebody who approaches this music so straightforwardly could possibly achieve what Baugus has with this recording. This is really good listening, folks; this is the real stuff performed at a level of excellence rarely matched. This is the kind of performance that gives you confidence that this form of music will last as long as people inhabit the planet. If you love traditional folk music, then *Long Steel Rail* is an absolute must.

—By Mitch Podolak

Toumani Diabate's Symmetric Orchestra

Boulevard d'indépendance
World Circuit/Nonesuch

From the opening brass fanfare, it's immediately apparent that this is not a typical CD from the Malian kora great we've come to know and love. Celebrated for his intimate instrumen-



Ember Swift

Reviews

tal solo and small ensemble recordings, Diabate has achieved popular and critical acclaim for his collaborative projects with international luminaries such as Ketama, Taj Mahal and his 2005 Grammy award-winning pairing with Ali Farka Toure. *On Boulevard d'indépendance*, Diabate assumes the mantle of "musical director": a role much emphasized in the CD packaging, which replicates, with a Warholian frequency, the image of the headphoned MD in full-on conductor mode. It's a slight indulgence that must be forgiven in light of this project's scope (more than 50 individual musicians credited) and quality. Diabate states that his goal

with the Symmetric Orchestra was to "mix the positive and authentic side of tradition with a contemporary and modern outlook" and to find a "balance between all the elements ... each instrument contributing to the whole, equally." He achieves his goal masterfully. This is a beautiful recording, clearly informed and infused by a mutual respect amongst a gathering of exceptional musicians.

— By Gallagher Parkinson

Dale Ann Bradley
Catch Tomorrow
Compass Records

This is a collection of songs which were written or selected by singer Dale Ann Bradley and produced by bluegrass giant Alison

Krauss. It brings together a singer of great skill with some of the best of North America's bluegrass players including luminaries like Jeff White on guitar and Jesse Brock on mandolin and Alison herself on banjo. The level of musical competence on this recording is astounding.

That being said, the disc as a whole lacks cultural focus as it shifts between country music and instrumentally oriented bluegrass that makes *Catch Tomorrow* feel like it can't make up its mind about what it's about. There is no doubt that Dale Ann Bradley is a great singer and a decent writer, but I can't honestly recommend this to either bluegrass

lovers or country fans because, despite some flashy moments of brilliance, its neither fish nor fowl.

— By Mitch Podolak

Kathleen MacInnes
Òg-mhadainn Shamhraidh
Greenrux

I didn't think I was going to like this one, but I did—quite a lot, in fact. Kathleen MacInnes has a voice to rival that of Karen Matheson and, on this record, a supporting cast of instrumentalists that's the cream of the U.K. traditional music scene.

The album, the title of which translates as *Summer Dawn*, is all quietly elegant and understated, but there

are plenty of highlights. The minimalist mantra of the opening song, *Bha Mise Raoir Air An Àirigh*, is completely acoustic but sounds as strangely modern as anything The Wire's writing about these days. There are a couple of nice a cappella songs, such as the gorgeous little love song *O Luaidh* where MacInnes is joined by Cathy Ann MacPhee and Julie Fowlis. And *Òran Dhòmnail Phàdraig lagain* is a moving lament for MacInnes's father, who died quite young.

As you've likely guessed, the songs are all Gaelic but the CD booklet includes English translations and notes on every song.

— By Richard Thornley

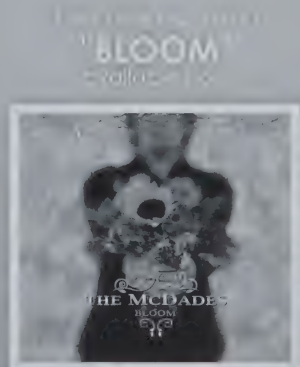
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Fred McDowell

Various Artists

Friends of Old Time Music: The Folk Arrival 1961-1965

Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

Not so much a box set, more an Aladdin's Cave of audio treasure, this triple helping of traditional American folk music history was recorded throughout 14 concerts run by the Friends of Old Time Music in New York City from 1961 to 1965.

These shows included the first-ever concert appearances by Doc Watson, Roscoe Holcomb, Clarence Ashley and Joseph Spence. You can even hear Mississippi John Hurt tell the audience how this is his first time back in New York since recording with the Okeh label in 1928-29. The long litany of artists here – mythical names from the pantheon of the folk tradition – also include Hobart Smith, Jesse Fuller, Doc Boggs and Fred McDowell. From their collective repertoires came the bedrock upon which the folk revival of the late '50s and early '60s was built.

And they continue to inspire the likes of The Duhks, The Be Good Tanyas and Gillian Welch. Indeed, the title of Welch's *Hell Among The Yearlings* comes from the Arthur Smith fiddle tune featured on disc two. Of the 55 tracks, only two have appeared elsewhere. All are acoustic and primarily songs, both familiar (*Shady Grove*, *Hard Times*, *John Henry*...) and obscure (*The Miller's Will*, *Lonely Tombs*, *Kneelin' Down Inside The Gate*...). From the brilliant gospel Georgia Sea Island Singers to the delightfully idiosyncratic guitar playing and singing of Joseph Spence, highlights abound. And if the evergreen and masterful Bill Monroe And His Bluegrass Boys make the most appearances (seven) on these discs, it's Clarence Ashley's, still fresh and vital, brilliant banjo-beaten, *Coo Coo Bird* that deserves special mention. For sheer emotional impact, though, the singing of Mother Maybelle Carter on *Foggy Mountain Top* can still make body hairs tingle.

As with all Smithsonian/Folkways releases, the packaging of these three discs is impeccable as each track receives extensive notes in a 55-page accompanying booklet. There are also expansive essays from some of the principle characters – John Cohen and Peter Siegel – of Friends of Old Time Music, along with archival photos. Heck if this box set doesn't win the Best Historical Album award at the next Grammys, I'll vote Republican.

– By Roddy Campbell

Various Artists

Classic Canadian Songs: From Smithsonian Folkways Smithsonian/Folkways

In 1950, Montreal artist and future folk impresario Sam Gesser visited Folkways Records Moses Asch in New York and a working partnership, that produced over a hundred records of Canadian folk music, was born. These recordings included the cream of Canadian folkdom – Jean Carignan, Allan Mills, Wade Hemsworth, Karen James, Lee Cremona and Tom Kines. When Moses Asch died in 1986 he left Folkways Records to the Smithsonian Institution. At that time, the list of records on the label exceeded 2200 titles, an accomplishment that dwarfs imagination. An astounding number of the albums had zero commercial value but during his life, Asch kept them all in stock even if they only sold a few copies a year.

The Smithsonian Institute in partnership with the University of Alberta's Folkways Alive has just released this startling, brilliant collection of 30 great songs culled mostly from the Gesser-Asch collaboration. Included are some really well-known gems like Wade Hemsworth's *Blackfly Song*, Alan Mills singing the song of French-Canadian resistance and longing *Un Canadien Errant*, the pro-Newfoundland *Anti-Confederation Song*, Eskasoni fiddler Lee Cremona playing his *Constitution Breakdown*

and a Tom Kines Canadian version of *Tim Finnegan's Wake*. Beyond what is well known is a body of traditional songs that illustrate the richness of our traditions including a Gaelic hand milling song from Cape Breton, a Yiddish song from Bessarabia, a song from Nova Scotian black loyalists, polkas, fiddle tunes, lumberjack songs, murder ballads, political satires – the whole damn thing that took Canada from confederation to the end of the first hundred years of nationhood. It's an amazing collection of great songs and it's a must for anybody who loves folk music and for anybody who wants to know where we come from.

– By Mitch Podolak.

Various Artists

Canoesongs Volume II Portage Productions

Is there anything more quintessentially Canadian than the canoe? I don't know, but there sure seem to be a lot of great songs about them here.

Volume II features gentle, lovely songs from Tanglefoot, David Essig, Cindy Church, Ian Tambllyn, Night Sun and James Gordon, among others. Listening through this album seems to propel me towards the calming waters of the Canadian Shield. And damn if it doesn't feel just so Canadian in the best possible way. A concept such as this could have veered into cutesy and tiring, but the strength of the songs keeps it on the right track.

As you would expect, the



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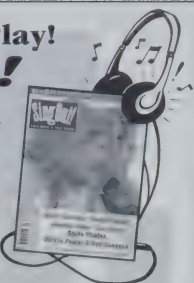
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Reviews

mood of the album is serene, very woody and full of charm, except for a momentary comedic break by Nancy White, who categorizes the Eskimo roll as "the down side of boating".

The proceeds from sales go to the Canadian Canoe Museum. So go ahead, indulge yourself – it's good for your soul.

– By les siemieniuk

Various Artists

Celtic Colours

Volume X

Odyssey

The Celtic Colours International Festival is a unique Cape Breton Island-wide celebration of Celtic culture – the largest of its kind in North America.

This double-CD features live recordings from the festival between 1997 and 2005. There are no sleeve notes and the track listings give the names of the artists, but not the name of the song or tune. What we have here is some great playing and singing. Sharon Shannon, Dougie MacLean, The Black Family, Dochas, Mary Jane Lamond, Altan and Phil

Cunningham are just a few of the excellent performers on show here. These recordings have a freshness that you only get in a live situation, and they all act as a great advert for the festival. Close your eyes, listen and dream... in colour.

– By Tim Readman

Various Artists

Landmarks: 30 years of a Leading Folk Music Label

Fellside Recordings

Just reading the track list is a mouth-watering experience. Names to conjure with, like Martin Carthy, Jez Lowe and the Bad Pennies, Bob Fox and Stu Luckley, Maddy Prior and Nic Jones, abound. The three CDs (for the price of one) are named *Signposts*, *Starting Points* and *Wayside Views* and represent a brave attempt to chronicle the genesis and evolution of Fellside, from fledgling recording company to fiercely independent and successful specialist folk label. In all, there are 68 songs and tunes here, representing some of the many high points from the

output of this Cumbrian (North-West English) label. Stylistically, there's quite a variety of material, from traditional singing to fiddle tunes; from contemporary singer-songwriter material to Americana. As a general comment, I much prefer the English traditional and traditional-sounding songs as opposed to the North American-style material. Outside of that though, here is a wealth of material that offers a fascinating insight into the development of recorded English folk music over the past 30 years. Oh yeah, Nic Jones rules and Maddy Prior's rendition of *The Blacksmith* rocks my world.

– By Tim Readman

Ralph McTell

The Journey

Leola Music

Ralph May should be a household name. His songs have been covered by the likes of Nanci Griffith, Fairport Convention and Sinead O'Connor. Well, there was a time when it was mandatory that every pub singer worth his Guinness sang *Streets of London*.

It would generally be enough for a songwriter to write one classic, but Ralph McTell's catalogue includes *Tequila Sunset*, *The Hiring Fair*, *Weather the Storm*, and *From Clare to Here*. It's all documented on *The Journey*, which also includes rare live performances and unreleased tracks, with some pre-dating his first album in 1967. It still surprises me, that after 40 years, McTell is somewhat unknown to the

general public. This collection goes at least part of the way in bringing his story to the forefront. *The Journey* documents not only his "hits" but gives space to his major influences, starting with the American blues and ragtime player Blind Willie McTell (who's last name Ralph took in tribute). McTell also covers three songs from his Bobness, one by The Beatles, Hoagy Carmichael and Randy Newman. Still, McTell's journey has never strayed much from course. With 66 songs and great guitar instrumentals, this should capture a newer folk audience and also make available, for the first time, much of his early roots.

– By Tom Coxworth

Nic Jones

Game Set Match

Topic

Nic Jones created the landmark album from which this magazine took its name. Tragically, he never recorded again due to the extensive injuries he suffered in a horrendous car crash in February 1982. For reasons that continue to baffle both his family and friends, all of his back catalogue but *Penguin Eggs* remains under lock and key. *Game Set Match* gathers live recordings from his concert appearances in the late '70s. With the casual innovative flair of his guitar picking and warm, effortless singing style, it's easy to hear why Jones has made such a massive impact on the careers of Kate Rusby and Eliza Carthy. An ingenious interpreter of traditional folk songs, this disc

provides plenty of examples of his masterful flair and good taste. *Ploughman Lads*, *Lakes of Shillin* and *Seven Yellow Gypsies* still set the standards to which any serious musician must surely aspire. One can only speculate on what might have been if only he had remained healthy. *Game Set Match*, though, offers an abundance of indicators.

– By Roddy Campbell

J.P. Cormier -

Looking Back Volume 1 – The Instrumentals Volume 2 – The Songs Independent

He is one of the hardest working roots music artists in the Dominion – a legendary road warrior and a giant, literally and figuratively, in Cape Breton music today who's created seven CDs in less than 10 years. Given all that, releasing a couple of compilations marking a decade of work is a great idea. They sum up his career to date and serve as a solid introduction for the new members of a growing audience.

The Songs, as Max MacDonald of the Celtic Colours Festival says in the liner notes, start from an inspired concept. Rather than the traditional splice and dice of a "greatest hits" package, J.P. has re-recorded the songs entirely. Anyone who has followed his career will find lots of opportunities for deep listening, comparing then and now. For the new listener, it's a very contemporary view of an artist and his work.

Given the power of this
(Continued on Page 59)





Shane MacGowan

The Pogues

October 10, 2006
The Fillmore
San Francisco, CA

It's been twenty-four years since the formation of the legendary Anglo-Irish act that combined traditional Irish folk with punk. While the band called it quits in 1996, they received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2006 Meteor Ireland Music Awards in Dublin. Propelled by the award they reunited and announced their first American tour in over 15 years.

One of the "50 Bands To See Before You Die," insisted Q magazine and, not knowing how long this reunion would last, I bought a ticket for one of their four gigs at the legendary Fillmore set in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury.

Notorious as no shows, it was with relief to spy guitarist Philip Chevron. At least they were in the build-

ing. And then, there was yer man, Shane MacGowan, a pint in one hand, a fag in the other and an assistant on each arm. MacGowan could barely stand, let alone a walk. His assistants prompting each foot in front of the other, his eyes glaring off in different directions. The crowd in the immediate vicinity parted to let him through to his dressing room.

Finally the house lights dimmed and the Clash's *This England* blared a warning. MacGowan lumbered to his post. Again, fag and pint in hand, he grasped the microphone. The crowd was euphoric! He looked at the audience and with a quick flick gave the two-fingers and uttered a bunch of incoherent ramblings. Spider Stacy, the tin whistle player and translator for the evening, informed us that they were happy to be there and here's a *Stream of Whiskey*. The band started playing,

Shane started wobbling and without hesitation he belched out the first words – coherently. And so began one of the most memorable performances I ever witnessed! *A Pair of Brown Eyes*, *Tuesday Morning*, *Dirty Old Town*, *Turkish Song of the Damned* – twenty-four songs in total.

As the show progressed, MacGowan became less wobbly and you could understand every word he sang. When the music stopped he was indecipherable – act or reality, we'll never know! Whatever, the other members were really laughing it up with every swerve and stagger.

The highlight came after the second encore. The lights dimmed again and snowflakes fell. The first few notes of *Fairytale of New York* filtered through the keyboard, and in pub sing-song fashion people linked arms and sang along. Accompanied by Jem Finer's daughter, Ella, MacGowan showed remarkable sincerity when he stumbled over and invited her to dance. Shane MacGowan was not just singing the song he had lived the song!

– By Ian Kilburn

idea and the energy it brings to the *Songs*, he might have done the same with *Volume 1*. It could have involved musical friends, sitting down and letting the tape roll.

There's no doubt about the chops, but maybe fresh players who – on any given day, might steal the show – could sharpen J.P.'s focus some.

As it is, the CD is clearly the work of a master instrumentalist. It reveals a powerful connection to Cape Breton and shows how strong an influence the years in Nashville had on his music. It's a good record, but an artist like J.P. has the experience, skills and musical roots to make a great one.

Coope Boyes & Simpson with Fi Fraser, Jo Freya & Georgina Boyes
Voices At The Door
No Masters Co-operative

The spirit of was-sailors, waits, and car-ollers of all stripes is captured on this the second seasonal disc by a group best known for its work with Peace Concerts Passendale, an arts group based in Flanders that celebrates the music and poetry of World War I. If you love British acappella singing, this hearty feast will get you right into the spirit of Christmas.

Truly, if you heard this sextet outside your window on Christmas Eve, you'd surely want to invite them in for a cup of frothy ale in exchange for their lusty versions of historical carols.

– By Barry Hammond.

David Francey

Carols For A Christmas Eve
Laker Music

If you like David Francey's Scottish lilt, you'll love this minimalist recording of his favourite carols. It is deliberately spartan with only piano backing, courtesy of Ottawa pianist Kathryn Briggs. There's a reason for the spacious, intimate style: this disc is designed to be sung along with.

This simplistic form allows the lyrics to these old carols to really pop out. If you've been singing along to these songs for years on auto-pilot, without really thinking about the lyrics, this rendition will give you cause to really experience the meaning of the words to old chestnuts like *Good King Wenceslas* and *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*. On the other hand, if his voice is not for you, then the disc will probably send you running to pull out your Vienna Boys Choir versions with full backing orchestra.

– By Barry Hammond.





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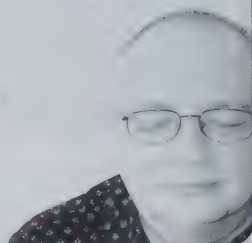
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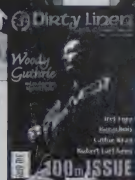
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The Tide's After Shiftin'

Words and Music by Laura Smith

The tid-e's aft-er shif - tin'. which wa-y will we roll?

F Am B^b

4 You are rock-ing hard - er than hard a - gainst t - he sides of

C F C B^b C

6 my soul. The ti-de's af-ter shif - tin' Can we tu - rn this a-round?

Dm Am Dm B^b F

9 Where does lo-ve hide at lo-w ti - de? Where's the pea ce to be found?

Dm Am B^b F

12 Can you tell me that you'll he - ar me the ne-xt time I call?

Dm Am B^b

14 Can you tell me that you'll s - ee me the ne - xt time

C Dm B^b Dm

16 I fall? Can you tell me not to wo - r - ry there's n-o

Am F C

18 rea - son to wo - rr - y The tid - de's af - ter shif tin'.

B^b F

20 It shifts a gain af - ter all.

(The chords for the last verse are the same as the last four lines above.)

I hear voices in the salt spray/I hear rumours on the wind/When the tide's after shiftin'/It's after shiftin' again.

Laura Smith's wonderful *The Tide's After Shiftin'* can be found on her self-titled second album. For more information go to www.laurasmith.ca. Massive thanks to Laura for very kindly allowing us to reprint it here. As always, much thanks to John Minter for transcribing the notes and words with the usual grace under pressure.

LE QUARTIER FRANÇAIS



Maïs et Grâces

Blé d'Inde, le nouvel album de Galitcha, propose une rencontre entre l'âme sikh et une enluminure québécoise. Tony Montague révisé ses leçons de ghazal – forme de poème bachique persan – et tend l'oreille vers Kuljit Sodhi pour cueillir ses propos inspirés.

L'avènement d'une musique mélangeant les traditions québécoise et punjabi a de quoi piquer la curiosité. Le second album du quartet Galitcha, *Célébration – Blé d'Inde*, s'ouvre sur une rafale de notes d'accordéon avec le musicien invité Yves Lambert, pour la pièce éponyme.

Fondateur et ex-chanteur de la Bottine Souriante, ce gars de Joliette est clairement dans un état second lorsqu'il se lance dans un monologue spontané – dans une langue inventée que l'on pourrait appeler le frindien : «O.K., all right, ze racalam a racalam racala racala rocky racoon, ryke enna me».

Puis, le grand chef de Galitcha, Kuljit Sodhi, entonne un chant en punjabi dans une tonalité mineure, supporté par l'harmonium, les tablas et le saxophone soprano. On sent clairement qu'une présence celtique émerge entre les couplets – elle vient de la mélodie de l'Homage à André Gagnon, une composition du légendaire accordéoniste québécois Philippe Bruneau. L'accordéon, l'harmonium et les autres instruments s'entremêlent lascivement, et mononcle Yves revient, cette fois pour dire en français : «Oui mon ami, tu aimes chanter des chansons de ton pays tout comme j'aime chanter celles du

mien moi aussi. Si tu viens chez nous, nous chanterons dans l'harmonie, la joie, le respect et la liberté.»

Cette invitation, Sodhi l'a déjà acceptée avec joie. Sa famille a émigré de Amritsar, capitale du Punjab, pour Montréal au milieu des années 1970, alors qu'il avait huit ans. Il fut immédiatement plongé au cœur du multiculturalisme montréalais.

«J'ai atterri dans un quartier appelé Parc Extension, par où passent tous les immigrants», raconte Sodhi, qui vit aujourd'hui à Gatineau. «À l'époque, il y avait environ 10 pour cent de la population d'origine asiatique et 90 pour cent de Grecs. Ce fut pour moi une introduction à la musique méditerranéenne. Les gens s'imaginent que l'Inde a une culture très dynamique alors que c'est en fait assez homogène.»

«En venant ici, c'était fascinant de voir le mélange des cultures, de les découvrir, leur nourriture, et leur musique. Je trouve qu'il y a des similarités entre le celtique et la musique traditionnelle du Punjab et le Québécois et la chanson traditionnelle d'Amérique du Nord. Le premier album de Galitcha [*Satrang*, 2002] fut une sorte de passeport pour nous, mais avec le second je savais que nous devions réunir toutes ces idées musicales.»

Le fond musical de Sodhi lui vient du terroir de ses origines, avec ses chants de dévotion sikhs. «Le dimanche, dans tous les temples sikhs, pour une partie du service religieux, les fidèles chantent tous ensemble, qu'ils soient amateurs ou professionnels, avec l'harmonium et les tablas. J'ai appris le style appelé shabad, des chants religieux, l'équivalent du bhajan hindou. C'est parfois assez classique. Des personnalités

bien connues et respectées transposent les traditions sikh et classique de la littérature dans les hymnes.»

La plus grande influence sur Sodhi fut Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan – un géant de la musique pakistanaise qawwali. Les chants sufis passionnés de Nusrat ont fait vibrer la corde sensible du jeune musicien. «Je l'ai rencontré alors que je faisais partie d'une troupe de danse qui performait au festival WOMAD de Toronto en 1998. Je n'ai pas reçu de réelle formation auprès de lui, mais il m'a motivé à chanter davantage et à faire quelque chose de plus.»

Sodhi, qui joue le dholki (tambour traditionnel du Nord de l'Inde) et le tumbi (un banjo à une corde fabriqué à partir d'une calebasse) forma Galitcha en 1996 avec la joueuse d'harmonium et chanteuse Chris MacLean, le percussionniste Shawn Mativetsky et le joueur d'instruments à vent Lindsey Wellman. Ils ont fait leurs débuts en interprétant des ghazals [chansons d'amour] et des qawwali de Nusrat. «C'est parti de là. À rencontrer d'autres musiciens, j'ai commencé à intégrer des influences un peu plus jazz.»

La rencontre avec Lambert semble aujourd'hui si naturelle, voire inévitable, mais elle n'eut lieu qu'en février 2005, lors de la conférence de la North American Folk Music and Dance Alliance à Montréal, après qu'un convive ait confondu Sodhi avec un ex-membre de la Bottine, et qu'ils furent présentés l'un à l'autre.

«J'ai commencé à montrer des chansons traditionnelles punjabies à Yves. Dès que je fredonne une chanson du Punjab à n'importe quel musicien québécois, on remarque que ça ressemble au rythme et au tempo des chansons à répondre du Québec, ou à la musique traditionnelle française, avec une touche celtique.

«Je suis allé chez Yves à Joliette et nous avons jammé. Nous avons joué aussi lors de conférences, et les directeurs qui sont venus nous voir après coup disaient : 'Nous sommes contents que vous ayez joué un mélange musical plutôt qu'uniquement de la musique traditionnelle québécoise parce qu'on est un peu tanné de ça'. Ce fut une motivation de plus pour nous.»

Sodhi et Galitcha prévoient d'autres incursions culturelles. Une des plages de *Blé d'Inde* fut écrite et chantée en anglais par Chris MacLean et porte le titre de *Road to Bamako* – la capitale du Mali. C'est l'histoire de la jeune Ousmane, âgée de onze ans, une orpheline de la rue à la voix magnifique qu'elle a croisée lors d'un voyage de Galitcha dans l'Ouest africain en janvier 2005 pour une performance à l'occasion du Festival au Désert, près de Timbuktu.

LE QUARTIER FRANÇAIS

«Nous voulons retourner là-bas pour travailler avec quelques-uns des enfants de la rue pour peut-être organiser un concert bénéfice. Nous avons déjà envoyé un premier convoi de médicaments – du Tylenol et des médicaments pour les enfants que nous avons collectés lors de nos concerts. Nous espérons retourner au Festival au Désert en 2008.»

D'ici là, Sodhi a d'autres gros projets de mélanges musicaux pour Galitcha. «Nous avons joué à quelques reprises dans des lieux sacrés et les gens nous demandaient de jouer des musiques religieuses. L'idée serait de réunir des musiques sacrées de différentes cultures – punjabi, musulmane et hindoue. Un peu comme le gospel en Amérique du Nord mais avec les traditions d'Asie du Sud.»

«Le directeur artistique du Lincoln Center [for the Performing Arts, à New York] m'a dit que si nous faisons cela, il nous inviterait à jouer là avec un groupe gospel des États. Tout ça vient de l'âme et je sens que la musique gospel d'Amérique du Nord – c'est presque comme le qawwali pour moi.»

Écologie Culturelle

Mathieu Fortier a fondé trois écoles – deux au Québec et une en Inde – pour enseigner la musique traditionnelle aux enfants de milieux défavorisés. Mary Beth Carty s'assied avec cet homme extraordinaire pour en savoir plus long sur Jeunes musiciens du monde.

Mathieu Fortier trouve à peine le temps de manger ces jours-ci. À une semaine des deux soirées bénéfices colossales qui réuniront sur scène une quinzaine de groupes et artistes montréalais bien connus dont Yves Lambert, Tomas Jensen, Afrodizz, Papillon, et les Respectables, sa voix trahi son épuisement. «Je suis encore en train de travailler et j'ai commencé à huit heures ce matin. Je pense que j'ai pris vingt minutes pour luncher.»

Le fondateur de Jeunes musiciens du monde compte sur ces deux spectacles, dont l'un aura lieu à Montréal et l'autre à Québec, pour réunir l'équivalent de 50% du budget annuel total nécessaire à faire vivre trois écoles de musique traditionnelle: dont une dans chacune des deux villes québécoises, et une troisième en périphérie de la ville de Dharwad, en Inde.

Fondé en 2001, le pensionnat indien loge, nourrit et soigne 90 jeunes qui étudient la musique classique indienne en plus du pro-

gramme scolaire régulier, six jours semaine. Les élèves, provenant des castes inférieures, profitent ainsi d'une éducation gratuite.

À Québec et Montréal, les cours de musique traditionnelle québécoise sont aussi offerts gratuitement aux enfants après l'école. Situées aux centres de quartiers où les taux statistiques de pauvreté, de criminalité et de violence sont les plus élevés, ces écoles donnent l'opportunité aux enfants défavorisés de suivre des cours de violon, flûte, guitare, piano, chant, percussion, composition et théorie musicale.

«C'est une entreprise d'écologie culturelle», d'affirmer Mathieu avec enthousiasme. «Tout comme il existe des espèces en danger d'extinction dans la nature, il y a des espèces culturelles et musicales menacées. Si l'on ne fait rien pour protéger et promouvoir les traditions de la planète, plusieurs sont vouées à disparaître. Nous avons confiance que ces enfants-là, bien qu'il viennent des quartiers ouvriers ou des villages, ont la force et le caractère pour porter ces cultures sur leurs épaules et les faire vivre, si nous leur donnons les bons outils pour le faire.»

En 1991, Mathieu quitta le Québec pour aller faire le tour de l'Asie. Il est tombé en amour avec l'Inde, se procura quelques cassettes de musique classique indienne, puis revint au Canada pour des études d'anthropologie. Un an et demie plus tard, il y retourna pour ses recherches et choisit d'y rester.

«C'est à ce moment-là que l'idée d'apprendre la musique classique indienne m'est venue. Tout le monde ne comprend pas la musique indienne à la première écoute. Elle n'est pas basée sur des mélodies accrocheuses, c'est bien plus une méditation profonde sur la nature du son.

«J'ai pris plusieurs années à apprendre la

musique, m'intéressant à la culture en général et à l'apprentissage des langues. J'essayais depuis longtemps de convaincre mon frère de me visiter là-bas. Puis, en 2000, il est venu pour la première fois et j'ai démenagé dans la ville de Dharwad – ce n'est pas si gros, mais il y a là une grande communauté de musiciens. Cette ville est un phare pour la musique classique indienne. Après un certain temps, l'envie m'est venue d'ouvrir une école du soir pour les enfants, mais ce n'était rien d'officiel – nous n'avions pas une organisation ni rien, mais nous l'avons fait. C'est à ce moment que nous avons réalisé que ça pouvait devenir notre vocation. Nous avons loué une ferme avec l'idée d'en faire un pensionnat où les enfants pourraient faire de la musique la moitié du temps et étudier les matières régulières l'autre moitié.»

De onze élèves, c'est passé à vingt, puis à soixante, puis à quatre vingt dix. «Depuis, nous avons déplacé nos activités sur une autre terre, nous y avons plus d'une vingtaine de bâtiments, dont la plupart sont des huttes de terre aux toits de tuiles. Les trois plus grosses bâtisses sont en briques.»

À l'heure actuelle, les maîtres de l'école sont parmi les musiciens les plus respectés d'Inde. «Au commencement, comme nous étions en pleine forêt, les musiciens étaient moins enthousiastes à l'idée de venir enseigner là.» Ils ont d'abord engagé quelques-uns des plus talentueux disciples du gourou Somanath Mardur.

Finalement, le gourou lui-même accepta d'y aller. Les enfants peuvent étudier l'harmonium, la percussion, le sitar, la danse, le violon et le chant. «Le chant est roi en Inde.» atteste Mathieu. «C'est ce que les gens veulent écouter et aspirent à performer le plus souvent.»



Jeunes musiciens du monde

LE QUARTIER FRANÇAIS

Vous comprendrez qu'il y a beaucoup d'histoires de réussites. Mathieu encourageait la cuisinière résidente, la femme d'un alcoolique, d'envoyer sa fille de douze ans à l'école au lieu de la faire travailler à servir les familles riches. «Quand elle est arrivée à l'école, elle était l'une des enfants les plus dures. Elle n'avait jamais pu socialiser parce qu'elle n'était jamais allé à l'école du village. Elle s'en plaignait à sa mère et décida de quitter. J'étais déçu, mais ce genre de chose arrive. Au bout d'un temps, elle est revenue et s'est montrée beaucoup plus motivée. Sa personnalité et sa perception d'elle-même ont changé énormément depuis. Elle n'est plus la petite fille qu'elle était. Elle est étudiante et, par-dessus tout, étudiante en musique. Elle est très dynamique et fournit un bon exemple pour les autres étudiants.»

En Inde, Mathieu rencontra sa femme et partenaire de projet, Agathe Meurisse, d'origine française, qui y était allée au départ pour travailler dans un orphelinat et étudier les langues. Ils ont maintenant quatre enfants et passent la majeure partie de leur temps à travailler et vivre à l'école. À neuf ans, Mira, la plus âgée des filles, montre un talent considérable au chant et à l'harmonium. Au concert bénéfice en 2005, sa performance m'a coupé le souffle. Comme ses parents, elle parle français, anglais, hindi et la langue locale, le kannad.

Pour revenir à Québec, l'activité peut-être la plus excitante qui se tient à l'école est l'atelier de composition. L'an dernier, quatre groupes de 12 à 15 enfants se rencontraient les jeudis pour travailler la musique de groupe et l'écriture. Quatre chansons furent créées, chacune à partir d'un thème différent choisi démocratiquement par les étudiants.

«Comme thèmes, les élèves ont choisi la nature et l'environnement, la musique, l'amour et les relations humaines, et le dernier groupe avait juste le goût de délirer, d'être drôle», raconte Sophie, directrice et professeure de composition à l'école de Québec. «Quelqu'un a commencé à parler de la craque d'un divan et on a tous trouvé ça si drôle qu'on a décidé que ce serait le thème de la chanson. Je prenais des notes en écoutant leurs idées sur ce qu'ils trouvaient dans le divan. C'est maintenant une chanson!»

Le processus d'écriture de ces quatre chansons dura de juillet à juin. «J'ai commencé par leur présenter les différents types de chansons traditionnelles. Après ça on choisissait le thème, on faisait des tables rondes pour trouver des idées, associer des mots, composer des phrases, mettre tout ça ensemble, créer un refrain. On trouvait

des mélodies, des accords, un accompagnement. Ce fut une expérience formidable.» Les enfants interprètent maintenant ces chansons en public et lors d'événements communautaires.

À part l'écriture et la composition, les étudiants de Québec apprennent des pièces instrumentales traditionnelles et des chansons du vaste répertoire québécois, aussi quelques airs irlandais et écossais. «Nous sommes en train de monter un petit livre pour que les enfants développent un répertoire commun et puissent jouer tous ensemble», dit Sophie.

Les professeurs de l'école de Québec ne sont pas étrangers aux fans de musique traditionnelle. Le professeur de violon, Martin Racine, a tourné et enregistré avec la Bottine Souriante pendant une vingtaine d'années. L'an dernier, Éric Favreau et Paul Marchand, deux membres du groupe Entourloupe, enseignaient aussi à l'école. En plus de ces respectables «gourous» québécois, une jeune génération de musiciens talentueux et ouverts d'esprits complètent l'équipe de professeurs de l'école.

Les concerts bénéfices de Montréal et Québec, respectivement les 17 et 23 novembre prochain, présenteront aussi des élèves interprétant deux de leurs compositions originales. D'ici-là, le temps presse pour Mathieu Fortier à mettre tout en place. Les concerts sont cruciaux pour que les écoles continuent à donner gratuitement l'enseignement aux enfants.

«Il y a deux choses que je n'aurais jamais voulu faire dans ma vie : de la sollicitation et de l'administration. C'est ce que j'ai fini par faire. C'est un sacrifice, mais je ne vends pas des tapis. Je ne ferais pas ça même pour une journée. Je préfère faire une différence qu'empirer les choses!»

Jeunes musiciens du monde change le destin des enfants moins privilégiés sur deux continents tout en aidant à garder les cultures traditionnelles en vie. Les dons en argent et d'instruments seront les bienvenus!

La chanson préférée de Sophie, créée dans le cours de composition, en est une à propos des relations humaines, premièrement parce que le processus donnait la chance aux enfants d'exprimer les émotions qu'ils auraient normalement gardé cachées. «Deux frères dans le groupe vivaient beaucoup de peine et de douleur. Leur père était en prison en Haïti et ils ne l'avaient jamais vu. Un des garçons avait écrit quelque chose, mais il était trop gêné pour me le montrer. Il a fini par le faire. Il avait écrit : "Des fois on est heureux, mais des fois on est malheureux". On a utilisé ça pour faire un brainstorming. Une fois terminée, la chanson est merveilleuse!»

Toumani Diabaté's Symmetric Orchestra

Boulevard de l'Indépendance
World Circuit/Nonesuch

Dès l'ouverture, avec une fanfare de cuivres, nous comprenons que n'avons pas affaire à un album typique du grand maître de kora malien que nous avons appris à connaître et aimer. Célébré pour l'intimisme d'une instrumentation solo et de ses enregistrements en petits ensembles, Diabaté s'attira l'acclamation du public et de la critique pour ses collaborations avec des sommités telles Ketama, Taj Mahal et Ali Farka Toure, laquelle lui valut d'ailleurs un Grammy en 2005. Sur Boulevard de l'Indépendance, Diabaté assume le titre de 'directeur musical': un rôle souligné par la jaquette, qui reproduit l'image du chef d'orchestre avec son casque d'écoute, amplifiée à une fréquence warholienne. Mais cette exaltation de l'égo s'oublie vite à la vue de la liste des contributeurs (des crédits sont donnés à plus de cinquante musiciens). Diabaté stipule que son but avec la Symmetric Orchestra était de 'réunir le côté authentique et positif de la tradition avec un allure moderne contemporaine' et de trouver un 'équilibre entre tous les éléments... chaque instrument contribuant au tout de manière égale.' Il remplit cet objectif d'une main de maître. Il d'agit d'un enregistrement magnifique visiblement nourri, inspiré et cultivé dans le respect mutuel par un rassemblement de musiciens exceptionnels.

— Par Gallagher Parkins



Toumani Diabaté

6/8 à Jos Bouchard

trad.

Violin

A

6

B

13

La première pièce est un classique du répertoire de Jos Bouchard et plus tard de Jean Carignan que j'ai apprise dans les sessions de Montréal. La seconde pièce a longtemps été ma préférée de tout le répertoire traditionnelle. Je l'ai apprise du groupe les têtes de violons. Joyeuses fêtes!

The first tune, which I learned in a session in Montreal, is a classic from the repertoire of Jos Bouchard and later, Jean Carignan. For a long time, the second one was my favourite Québécois reel. I learned it off the CD *Airs Tordus* by the band Les Têtes de Violons. Happy holidays!

– Pascal Gemme (Genticorum)

le Talencourt

trad.

A

19

23

B

27

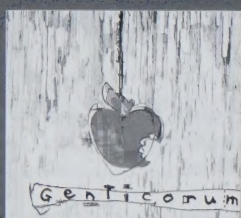
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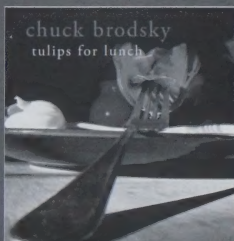
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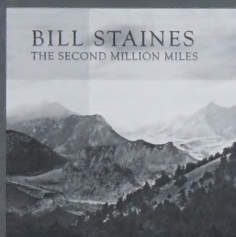
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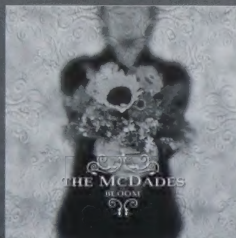
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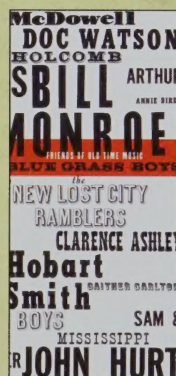
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